international film review

First Year 1949 Number 3

INTERNATIONAL FILM REVIEW

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION
of the International Catholic Cinema Office (O. C. I. C.)
12, rue de l'Orme, Bruxelles 4, Belgium.

Edited in three languages : English, French, Spanish.

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English version : J. A. V. BURKE; French version : J. P. CHARTIER; Spanish version : A. M. SAGI.

Printers : IMPRIMERIE ST. PAUL, SA., Rue Jean Origer 6—8, Luxembourg, Grand Duchy.
Typography : Nico SCHNEIDER. *Cover-design :* DELFO.

ADMINISTRATION

Central Office: Yvonne de HEMPTINNE, General Secretary, O. C. I. C., 12, rue de l'Orme, Bruxelles (Belgium); Tel. 34-81-50.
Accounts payable to : CCP Luxembourg, No 140-87; Bank : Banque Internationale à Luxembourg, Account No 5250.

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For all *countries not mentioned*, address inquiries to the Catholic national cinema office or to the Central Office at Brussels.

Yearly Subscription Rates (4 issues)

Great Britain, Ireland and the Dominions: £ 1. (single copies, 5/-); U. S. A., Canada: 4 Dollars (single copies, 1 Dol.); Switzerland: 15 Frs. (single copies, 4 Frs.); «Benelux» Countries: 150 Belgium Frs. (single copies, 40 B. Frs.); France: 900 French Frs. (single copies, 250 F. Frs.). For all others countries, a price has been arranged by agreement between the National representative for the country concerned and the Central Office.

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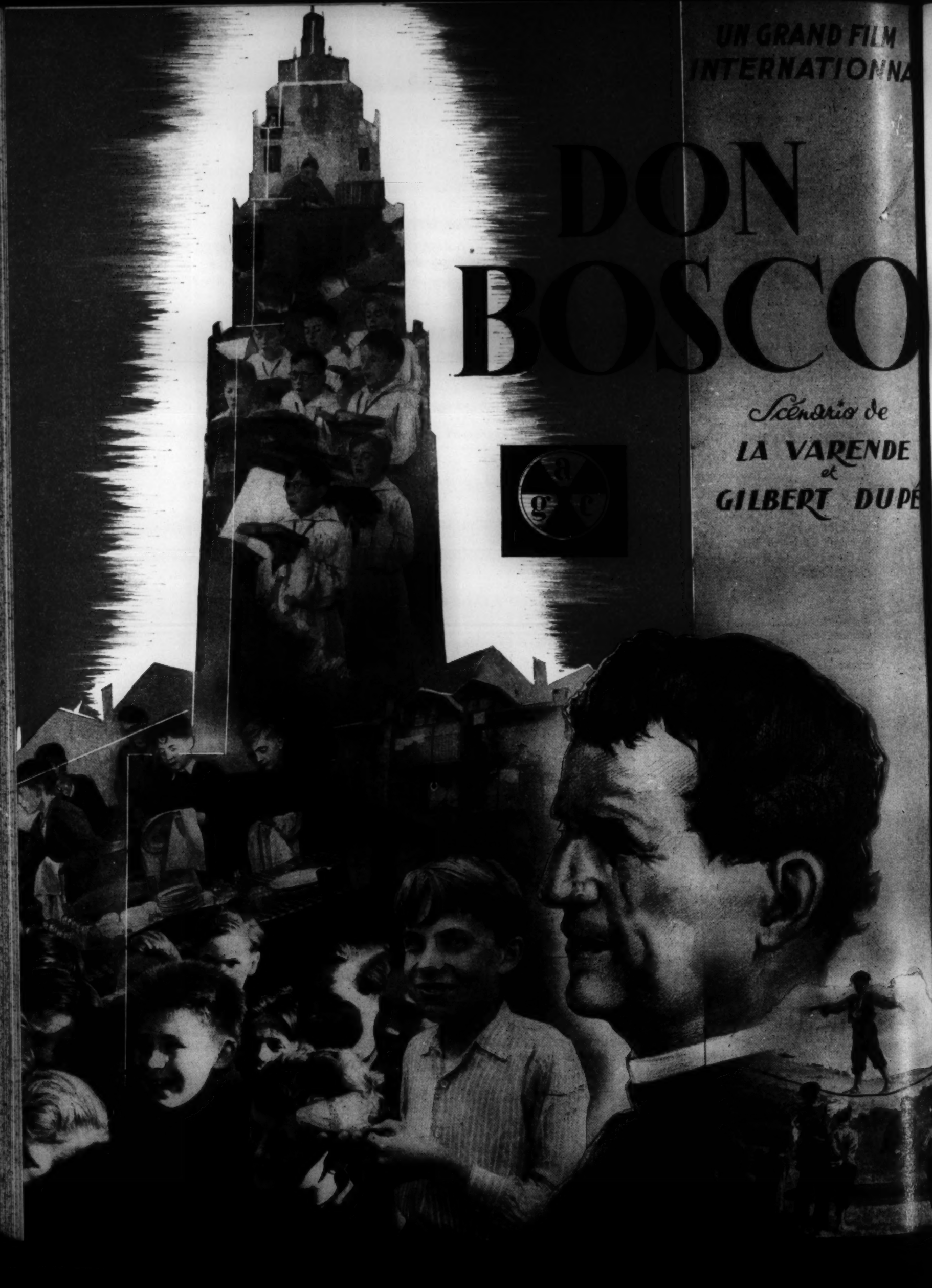
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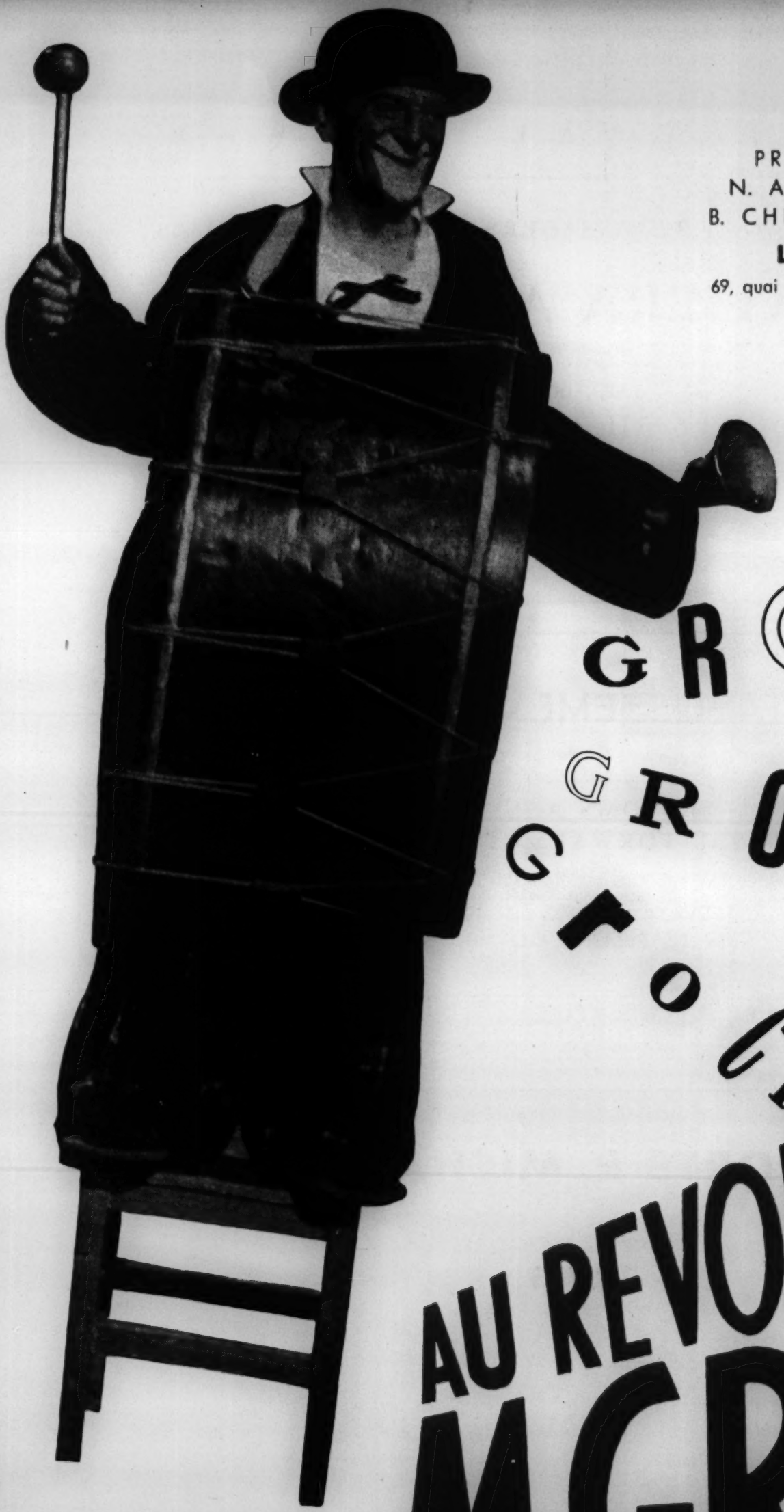

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INTERNATIONAL FILM REVIEW

NUMBER 3 — 1949 — YEAR 1

Here is a message sent us by the Most Rev. T. D. ROBERTS, S. J., Archbishop of Bombay, now visiting Europe.

THE INFLUENCE OF FILMS

Seldom, if ever, in human history has "mass conversion" taken place on such a scale as in the United States where the sacred dogma of isolationism has yielded to the discovery that Americans are limbs of a single world body threatened with a mortal disease. The remedy they offer in the economic order is welcomed gratefully by most of the nations in Europe and Asia who are free to accept it. In the moral order the best of the Hindus in India, of Muslims in Pakistan, of Buddhists in Ceylon and Burma tend to be apprehensive of western influence associated in their minds with the way of life reflected in Hollywood. Hence a puritanical aversion in India for example, to the western film, comparable to her prohibition of alcoholic drink.

The Communist, quick to exploit every advantage, stresses the affinity between oriental "spirituality" and the disciplined dedication of Russia to a cause.

Shall Hollywood or Moscow control the senses that command the citadel of human thought and desire? The cynic may see little to choose between them. The man who knows that the cinema of the Christian can be a Christian cinema, that Hollywood itself, under Christian pressure, has done some real good and avoided much evil — such a man will put all he has into fetching through the screen God's unsullied gifts to the bodies, minds and hearts of His children.

My acquaintance while in India with Catholic Film Reviews was chiefly through the "Universe" and "Catholic Herald". Had I ever doubted that this is the age of the layman, the corrective would have been to hand in the weekly column on Films, by Grace Conway in the "Catholic Herald" or by her anonymous colleague in the "Universe".

A Bishop who has no illusions about the number of people reached by his pastoral letters, or about the force of their impact made on a pre-breakfast assembly through selected passages read as if . . . . well, he must find sober inspiration in the million readers of the Catholic film columns, avid to know where to purchase the week's entertainment with the maximum pleasure-cum-profit. Indeed, one can find no greater praise for the apostles concerned ("witnesses" surely)than that they rise to the height of such an opportunity.

"Focus" and the "International Film Review" I know little but hope to know better here in England. We see God, at present "through a glass, darkly", but clearly enough to reflect Him truly if we can but "focus" His gifts correctly. To do that is the aim of the priests and layfolk who pool their expert knowledge in the making and appraising of films.

Catholic Film Action groups such believers in and between nations, organises their activities under the blessing of Christ's Vicar. May He bless them from His Heart whose human eyes and ears were ever open to His Father's message.

T. D. Roberts, S. J.,

Douglas WOODRUFF
Editor of "The Tablet", London

THE FILMS AND A CHRISTIAN ORDER

The great and unique power of the film is its power to convey environment. Better than any other medium, it can convey what it means to live in distant places or remote times to wrest a living from new soil in the far West, in the tropics or in the Arctic Circle. It can show what is the actual pressure of material circumstances on the proletarian and the Paris suburbs, or the Italian peasant. This is a new power. Shakespeare's prologues call on the audience to use their imagination, so that the wooden "O" of the Globe Theatre becomes Agincourt, and in his historical plays, which are so full of decisive battles, war is represented by a series of hand-to-hand encounters, in one and then "another part of the field". This did not much matter to Shakespeare and his public, for the drama that absorbed them was the conflict of strong characters amid immense personal temptations, ambition, avarice and revenge. But in our own day, when we have thought a great deal more about environment, when our history is not dynastic but social, we must be thankful for an invention that has given us this new power of understanding the contexts in which other people, our ancestors and our contemporaries, have lived, and live their lives.

The great difficulty in building an international Christian order is that we have all lived for so long in our separate compartments. We are the products of very distinctive national histories, and our internationalism itself is so often intolerance; the projection of our experience and our standards, and the application of them to foreigners, whom we then mark down as backward or inferior, and uncivilised. We in England are particularly prone to do this, forgetting the special advantages which our island life has given us. We have had a much less military history than other countries. Our Government has been in consequence less militarised, not the projection of an army — emperors are imperators, army commanders, — and we have in consequence demanded a higher standard of constitutionalism than we have often found abroad. The British and the Americans have had a historical experience, primarily agricultural and commercial, where most peoples in the world have had a history that is essential military, preoccupied with defending a frontier, and reflecting in their social life, the domination of a military class. These are profound differences, coming out of history and determining how far people are what we accept as democratic. Even among Christians, there is today a great tendency for the first question about fellow Christians, to be, "are they democratic?" The film can help us to understand why men can be very imperfect democrats judged by our political standards, and at the same time very likely much better Christians than we can claim to be. It can help us to see that civilisation existed before democracy, and it can show us that the respect for law, the reign of law, which is the essential mark of a civilised society, has been everywhere a great achievement of the Church.

The film has a particular power of depicting historical moments. I only regret that in such a fine film as "MONSIEUR VINCENT" the scenes of the *Fronde* are so very brief and unintelligible unless you already know the history, because one of the great lessons of history is the thinness of the crust, how little margin there has generally been between civilised living, and the anarchy of violent passion. There are times when the most civilised men have been and had to be the most authoritarian, establishing and consolidating the essential authority of Church and State. So it was in the dark middle ages. There have been other times when the civilising activity that has been most valuable, has taken the form of movements to mitigate and lessen the power of authority. Such had been the great liberalising movements in economics and politics inside the stable society which had first to be built and made strong before they could be softened and humanised. To show this relativity is one way, as it seems to me, in which the film can be used to broaden the sympathies of people who, left to themselves, will tend to judge past and present too narrowly, by what they themselves know and have experienced.

If the large lesson of history is to make allowances and to understand how different life can be, there will also emerge something even more valuable for the unity of mankind, — a recognition that men are always and everywhere moral beings under temptation, and that the essential character of the world for men is that it is a theatre for the exercise of moral choice. In their day, both the Chinese and the Mexicans have had to complain that they have provided much more than their due share of villains in American films. And that this made the American public think worse of them than they deserve. Such protests are a welcome testimony that there is a common code. The alarming thing is when what some

people accept as virtues, are treated by others as vices. As when Nietzsche derided the Christian virtue of pity. For we have to face the fact that there are aberrations of the moral sense, and that an international Christian order has to begin with very elementary conversions in many parts of the world, and not only among the head-hunters of Borneo. All we can really mean at present is something much more limited and partial than a Christian world order. We can hope that the countries and peoples formed by the Catholic Church between 300 and 1500, and their settlements and colonies, Catholic or Protestant, which carried the European civilisation outside Europe, can come more and more to recognise, that at the deepest level, they really are one society, with the same conceptions of right and wrong. The film can help to show them this, and teach not too quickly to be censorious about each other, when they appreciate how each people has had a unique historical experience which has left its ineffaceable marks, if not its scars, upon them.

Douglas Woodruff

Andrew BUCHANAN
Producer, Director, Author, London

CAN FILM SAVE HUMANITY?

Towards the end of the last war I organised two private conferences to investigate the possible uses of film to increase international understanding. The first was attended by leading members of the arts and professions; the second, by high-ranking representatives of many nations. Unanimity was reached on the following points;

> *That film is the most powerful influence in our midst. That it made no important contribution to world peace and spiritual enlightenment between the wars. That, as a commercial medium, it has pandered to materialism and nationalism.*
>
> *That the years following the war would offer the greatest opportunity for the development of films designed to project spiritual truths, and contribute towards the unification of the human race.*

My purpose in holding these conferences was to lay the foundations for a non-profit making organisation for the making and systematic interchanging of films solely designed to introduce the peoples of the world to each other as they really are, and not as misrepresented by opposing governments. Films to emphasise that civilization is composed of individuals and not depersonalised masses — individuals who are fundamentally similar — who create, or should create, a universal brotherhood — who need the same primary requirements, first amongst which is the desire to live and work in peace with their families, and not be forever dragged forth and sacrificed on altars set up by political deities for extremely high sounding purposes which can be achieved only by the most cruel and criminal practises. Films to project the teachings of Christ, showing they contain all the solutions to the problems engulfing mankind. The plan did not develop because too many barriers were encountered. To seek to build up a structure on universal lines in a world sharply divided by knife-edged national barriers approaches the impossible. However, knowing that such spiritual enlightenment via the screen is one of the imperatives, I continued to seek the way.

Through these years, one fact has remained uppermost in my mind — that any such films addressed to humanity with a purpose other than to provide entertainment s h o u l d not, and, indeed, c o u l d not be produced according to the rules and regulations governing the commercial film industry. First, because costs would be prohibitive. Secondly, because although it may be technically possible for a concern to make, say, a musical comedy today, a gangster subject tomorrow, and a film for humanity the day after, it is spiritually impossible to make the l a t t e r subject to the best advantage under commercial conditions, save only by a team whose sole mission is to create the kind of films for which mankind is waiting — often unconsciously. This is no reflection on the commercial film industry, for its purpose is fundamentally different. It is necessary to point out, however, that until now, all films, whether for commercial or spiritual purposes, have been made within the commercial film industry. There has not, it appears, been any realisation that the industry needs subdividing for special purposes. Always before me is the figure of the priest who has dedicated his life to religion. Humble, working for a mere pittance, yet inspired, and frequently possessed of fine creative ability which finds expression through his pen or brush. His forbears were the craftsmen who worked for the love of God — building, carving, painting, writing. Men who put everything they possessed into their work instead of getting as much as they could out of it. And so it has seemed to me that if films are to be made worthy to rank with the greatest examples of religious art — films which possess something more than technical excellence — then they cannot be made by a commercial machine,

but only by a dedicated group, possessed of vision, spiritual strength, and determination. Think, for a moment, of the many Orders with their special missions — teaching, preaching, healing — and then think of the future possibility of a new Order devoted to employing film to reach the multitudes — knitting the peoples together — transcending political barriers — dispelling hatred born of ignorance, and, via the screen, projecting the Christian message. By working along such lines, I have discovered that a surprisingly large number of organisations are engaged, quite independently, on international work, planning world harmony, and an undivided civilization. Some of them do not even know of the existence of others, and yet their target is a common one. To some, the problem is political; to others cultural, but whether consciously or unconsciously, all are working for what is surely the greatest of spiritual purposes — making the brotherhood of men under the Fatherhood of God a reality. I have gathered together and co-ordinated a representative number of these organisations, and, collectively, we have formed a group with a Council composed of delegates from each associated body, and a company to conduct its administration and production work. An output is being planned of factual films for world release, to be distributed both through the co-ordinated facilities of the Council's organisations and other existing important channels which are in full sympathy with the purpose of the Circle.

All technical facilities are being provided without charge, and any profits resulting from distribution will be given back to the company and devoted to further production.

I see numerous hurdles to be jumped, but I am encouraged by the great amount of common ground which has been revealed by the joint discussions of the Council members.

Maybe, one day a Centre will arise to facilitate the work. Liken it to a monastery or a mission headquarters, housing the group of craftsmen and training others to follow them. But whether large or small, only a dedicated group unrelated to commercial filmdom, can create films of this very particular kind. To seek to intermingle such work with the complex and costly methods of entertainment film making is to invite disappointment and delay and time is short.

Are there sufficient people in the world ready to give themselves to this great task? I am sure there are.

If we plant our seeds with care and skill today, the harvest in the years to come will prove of benefit to all Mankind.

Hilary J. CARPENTER, O. P.
Provincial of the Dominicans, London.
Chairman - Catholic Film Institute

THE PHILOSOPHY OF BEAUTY IN FILM

«ART», according to Aristotle and the Scholastics, is a good quality or virtue of the pratical intelligence, a potentiality whereby a man is in a condition of soul to envisage the proper layout of things that are to be made by him. This seems to me to be a proper rendering of the classic phrase *recta ratio factibilium* and perhaps the most important word to note is «soul», for a virtue is that which embellishes not merely a particular faculty in a man but his whole being. The rectitude of his intelligence implies the rectitude of his nature. «Art itself is thus constituted», writes Coventry Patmore,[1]) «because it is the constitution of life, all the grace and sweetness of which arise from an inflection of law, not from an infraction of it, as bad men and bad poets fancy . . . Bad morality is necessarily bad art, for art is human but immorality is inhuman.»

Let me not be misunderstood. It is certainly not my contention that art is necessarily and only concerned with subjects in themselves moral. Even in Holy Scripture itself, rightly called a divine work of art, the subject-matter is, on occasion, highly immoral; but the manner in which this subject-matter is handled, and the placing of it in its due setting in the drama of man's relations with God, are in perfect accordance with the laws of morality and of art.

It is all the more important to restate this basic canon of art in an age which is coming more and more under the influence of what is called, often very loosely, «the art of the cinema«. This new mode of art, like any other of its modes,

1) *Principle in Art. Ch. 4.*

is to be judged in each case by the beauty or absence of beauty in its expression; in art, beauty is the outward sign of goodness. Moreover, in a certain sense, the cinema is potentially the most perfect vehicle of beauty in art, for the essential characteristic of beauty is *light*. Admittedly the philosophers of a past age were not primarily concerned with material light in so characterising beauty; for Plato, for Augustine, for Aquinas, it is primarily a question of the light of intelligence, the intangible splendour of truth; and this is itself but a reflection of the infinite splendour of the Divine Intelligence and of Divine Truth manifested in creation, and participated in however finite a degree by the human mind. Yet, as far as material expressions of beauty in art are concerned, material light is an essential requisite for its manifestation and appreciation. We may, therefore, justly regard the cinema as, potentially at least, an art-form peculiarly adapted to the expression of beauty.

This does not overset the accepted thesis that both sight and sound are the highest vehicles of beauty, nor does it militate against Cardinal Newman's assertion that sound is its supreme vehicle. In his day sound alone had all the infinite range of mobility which, in our day, the cinema has given to light; and light is in itself a far more perfect medium for the communication of mind with mind in the realm of beauty, though the most perfect medium of all is attained where mobile light is completed by ancillary sound duly subordinated to it.

If and when this potentiality of the cinema is realised, there must be operative in each case a creative intelligence endowed with that virtue which is called art; moreover it must be, as seems clear, a single intelligence. A true craftsman is an artist; but a true craftsman does not necessarily produce a work of art. A craftsman may well produce a chair or a statue that is a work of art; but it was not a craftsman that produced York Minster or Chartres Cathedral. Such works of art were created by the mind and the active direction of a man who could rightly be called «the producer», and could only have come into being at the bidding of one who, in producing them, was reproducing in them the highest aspirations of his own soul; for another essential quality of beauty is that of integrity.

Again it must be understood that I speak of integrity in its widest sense, subjective as well as objective and inclusive therefore of moral integrity. That integrity must first be found in the artist himself, for a thing made is the reflection of the maker and the quality of the effect cannot exceed (though it can fall short of) the quality of its cause. This is not to say that the absence of practical moral integrity in the artist necessarily destroys the beauty of his art. But there must at least be integrity of the mind and even, basically, of the will; for the artist must not merely conceive his child but must love it.

Finally there must be a due use and ordering of the means proper to the particular art-form. This involves, on the part of the artist, a quality of mind that Jacques Maritain calls «*la logique ouvrière*». «Notre Dame de Chartres», he adds by way of example, «is a marvel of logic as much as is the Summa of St. Thomas.» [2]) In this very work St. Thomas Aquinas lays down the basic principle of all art: «The perfection of art consists in an act of judgment.» [3]) And this act of judgment is itself necessarily dependent upon standards which are themselves the outcome of intellectual integrity.

The application of these general principles to the art of the cinema is not difficult, at least in theory. One thing stands out crystal clear at any rate: the producer-director, a single individual, is essential if the cinema is to give us good films, that is to say films which conform to the essential notion of beauty and art. It is not sufficient for a film creator to conceive the film in his mind; it cannot become a work of art until he incarnates in matter the idea that is in his mind, for it is this hylomorphic composition (to use the Aristotelian phrase) that alone produces a reality that can be perceived and appreciated by others. The making of a film, like the making of a cathedral, demands the skilled co-operation of innumerable craftsmen, all of whom must be artists in their degree; but there must be a single master-builder, the mind that has conceived the work of art in all its splendour, integrity and composition, who must supervise the total production in all its multiform growth.

One has heard of the producer who, once he has passed the final script, has no further interest in the production. It was not thus that Chartres was built or the *Summa Theologica* written. Nor is it thus that a work of art and beauty in the world of film is to be created. A producer needs not be able to build a set; but he must know how his set

2) *Art et Scolastique*,, P. 84.
3) *IIa IIae, 47. 8.*

is to be built. He needs not be able to use a camera or lights; but he must know how they are to be used. He needs not be able to act; but he must know how his characters should act. He may not be able to cut and edit; but he must know how the cutting and editing are to be done. And not only must he know these tools of his trade and how they are to be used; he must supervise their use in the actual production.

It may be objected that this practical application of the philosophy of beauty to film production is in effect the turning of film production into an act of religion, and that it assorts oddly with the general run of film production. For my part I accept the implication and deny that it is an objection. It has been truly said and often said that all good art is religious art, and there has undoubtedly been good art in the cinema. This does not mean that all good art confines itself necessarily to the treatment of religious subjects in the accepted sense of the term. This is to minimise and misunderstand the extent and profundity of the true notion of religion. This is to divide religion from life, and so to destroy the integrity of human living. Art, like human living in all its aspects, must be an expression of a man's soul recognising (albeit often unconsciously and sometimes unwittingly) the relation of things created to the Creator. Art is to catch the reflection of the beauty of God in the works of His Hands; and the ability to do this is itself a gift of God.

In lumine tuo videbimus lumen: in Thy light shall we see light. This is supremely true of the supernatural light of sanctifying grace; but it is also true of the natural light of human understanding and appreciation of beauty. It is not without significance that we find St. Thomas Aquinas including «the beautiful» amongst the transcendentals as a corollary of «the true». If to produce a good work of art is to produce a thing of beauty, and if the quality of an effect is inevitably the quality of its cause, then there must be in the artist the integrity denoted by transcendental truth, for transcendental truth is in this case nothing other than an integrity of being, recognising, by a kind of connaturality, its own relationship of absolute dependence on the Supreme Cause. This recognition of absolute dependence, even in its least supernatural form, represents the essential note of religion.

An integrity of this sort can be recognised in some of the film producers of to-day, though still in all too few. The more conscientious of these, at least, are aware of their grave responsibility, are perhaps even made anxious by it. They have in their hands a medium of communication with vast numbers of other men and women, a medium whose power for good, and so by an inevitable alternative for evil too, is greater than any yet given to mortal man. In their light, too, and through the medium of the material light of the cinema, millions can see the light — or be turned towards darkness. If it is true light it will be a reflection of the light of God and it will create works of beauty that will be a reflection of the divine beauty because they will be a reflection of divine truth; and so by the visible things of creation men will come to know or know better the invisible things of God.

In this sense, then, all good art in the world of the cinema is religious art, even though hitherto most of the films on specifically religious subjects have not succeeded, unfortunately, in being good cinema. (There are, of course, notable exceptions like «MONSIEUR VINCENT» and «VISITATION.) The quality or virtue of art in a man may well be called a natural grace, for it is a gift from God, as supernatural grace is, and is designed to be used in His service. Where it is used with integrity by the film producer, be the subject matter what it will, there can be expected a film that is a work of beauty and of religion.

Hilary J. Carpenter, O. P.

Robert SPEAIGHT
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THE FAITH AND THE FILM

All attempts — and there have been many — to discuss a Christian theme or merely to indicate a Christian dimension, in the world of contemporary entertainment are spoiled by a certain self-consciousness. The Christian knows that he is addressing a Pagan public. His values are not shared by the average spectator, and they have not, as yet, the excitement of novelty. The audience vaguely remembers these things — a myth and a morality — but remembers them as one remembers a lesson in the schoolroom, as something long since left behind. He is embarrassed by the reminder, for he suspects that the reminder is a reproach. He feels that he is being got at, and puts himself on the defensive. When the Christian gets behind his defence, he complains, though not always aloud, that he has been hit below the belt. The theatre or the screen, he will say, are no places for propaganda.

Another propagandist — the Communist for example — is not in the same difficulty. He is announcing a new gospel, although its novelty very quickly wears off. He is shrewd enough to realise that the average spectator is a hungry man or woman; more than that, he or she is an invalid prepared to try any remedy, from sex to socialism. The problem for the Christian is that his public is post-Christian rather than Pagan. It has the taste, or rather the distaste, of Christianity in its mouth. It is easier to make a new appeal to the palate than to restore the savour to something which has turned sour. The architects and sculptors of the mediaeval West, the artists in mosaic of Byzantium, even the mummers who trundled their mystery plays round the English countryside, were entertaining, in their degrees, a public where Christianity was a popular religion. Its practice may have been corrupt in all manner of ways but it composed the landscape of the common mind.

I do not think the day is far distant when the Gospel will regain its original glamour of good news. But while we are awaiting and hastening that day, the Christian artist must define rather carefully the appropriate spheres of art and apologetics. In the nature of his faith he is liberated from the sterile doctrine of Art for Art's sake. He knows that any great work of Art is the messenger of a more than aesthetic meaning. But where he is concerned to persuade and not merely to state, he has to be particularly careful of his methods. «He's preaching at us» — audiences are very ready to hurl this abuse at the well-intentioned, if they feel that the technique of the pulpit has been transferred to the stage or screen. Very often, he will make his point better by not underlining it, by allowing it to speak for itself. The Christian play or picture tends to fall into one of two categories; it will either be designed for a Christian or a secular audience. Sometimes, it is designed for both, but even here the effect will be different according as the public accepts or does not accept, understands or does not understand, the values by which it is inspired.

It is interesting to compare certain recent films, which have had a wide and successful showing. Film companies are not averse from religious subjects, because these are generally rich in dramatic and aesthetic appeal. But they find it very difficult to penetrate to their inner meaning. This is not surprising. A religious experience may be attended by all kinds of dramatic circumstances, but the actual appeal to the soul by God is not easily dramatised. It is the most secret and indescribable thing we can imagine. Anything the stage or screen can show us must have happened after the event; the event itself cannot be translated. Even Mr. Eliot could not resolve this difficulty in «THE FAMILY REUNION» — and «THE FAMILY REUNION» is one of the very few profound religious dramas of modern times. Suddenly we know that the hero has been converted; but the moment, the process, is hidden from us. This being so, the producer or the actor must at all costs guard against overstatement; he must resist the attempt to drag out the ineffable into the light of day, to flatter a public which has been debauched by sentimentality. Everything is against him — the ghastly decor of the cinema, the glucose melodies of the organ — but unless he can compel the public to a measure of asceticism, he is lost. At best, he will have scored a sentimental triumph. He will have sent his audience home with a nice feeling inside; he will not have braced them by the electric contact of reality.

This is where nearly all religious films fall down. I do not object to them for being beautiful;

what I object to is the order of their beauty. Nothing, for example, could have been more painstaking than the recent «JOAN OF ARC» with Ingrid Bergman. A distinguished French Jesuit, Père Doncoeur, had supervised the making of the film, and Miss Bergman played with sincerity and intelligence. Yet the thing was dead. Accurate and lavish and well-acted, it remained a highly-respectable corpse. Why? Because the saving imagination was not there, which would have allowed us to see into the nature of sanctity. Where this was lacking, technicolour was no substitute; by gilding the shell, it emphasized the void within. Even with «THE SONG OF BERNADETTE» which was a much better film, the whiff of the supernatural was absent. I am inclined to think that both these films were defeated by their own dramatic possibilities.

The saving contrast is of course «MONSIEUR VINCENT», and here it is interesting to suggest that the French film probably cost a quarter, or less, of what was spent on «BERNADETTE» or «JOAN». Had this comparative poverty something do do with its effect? Everything depended on Pierre Fresnay, and here one can only bow before the mystery of a masterpiece. I have no idea how it was done, with what intensity of concentration, with what infallible adaptation of means to ends. But the miracle was worked. Sanctity was there in front of us — its odour as unmistakable as a lavender bed. It is in the nature of miracles to be rare, but if no religious film can succeed without them, what, you may ask, is the good of going on trying? A performance, like Fresnay's Vincent de Paul, is indeed a rarity, the result not only of genius but of intensive study. But it gained not a little, I think, from the simplicity which surrounded it. «MONSIEUR VINCENT» was not a very accurate film, but it was evidently authentic — and this authenticity derived from the spiritual climate in which it was produced. St. Vincent de Paul belongs even to modern France in a way that neither Saint Joan nor Saint Bernadette belong to Hollywood. Nevertheless there is in the United States a large Catholic public which will always accept an American version of Sanctity. But in Britain the Catholic public is infinitesimal. Here it is instructive to see the kind of religious plays or films which have succeeded. I suppose Miss Bergman's Saint Joan is drawing the crowd because it already knows Miss Bergman and because it has already learned a lot about Saint Joan from Mr. Shaw. «THE SONG OF BERNADETTE» was popular because Mr. Werfel had already exploited the possibilities of an uncommonly good story. «MONSIEUR VINCENT» was successful, within a more limited showing, for profounder reasons. The English are an imaginative, but they are not a mystical people, and they judge Christianity by its works. The evangelical virtues of Saint Vincent were too shining to escape an attention which went deeper than applause. I wonder how many of us left the Curzon Cinema shaken but also slightly ashamed? The lesson of all this is that the seed must be scattered on fertile ground; the film, to move an audience to thought as well as to emotion, must find the sensitive spot. The vital impact must be allowed to do its work, and the blow must not be softened by concessions to spectacle or sentiment.

There is a great future, as it seems to me, for the efficient documentary. «VISITATION» was a case in point. This story of the Medical Missionaries of Mary and their work among the lepers in West Africa was clearly and courageously told. The feelings of the audience were not spared, and the result proved that the corporal works of mercy have an abiding appeal. I believe that a magnificent film could be made of the Student's Pilgrimage to Chartres — here the visual opportunities are tremendous — or of Rome during the Holy Year. For the non-Catholic these subjects would obviously have a more external, even a more superficial, appeal. But they could hardly fail to arouse curiosity, and the gratifications of curiosity sometimes come as a shock to the questioner. This kind of film, instructive, unsentimental, and taking nothing for granted, is especially suitable for Britain where the memory of Catholicism is dim. If, however, it were ever sufficiently awakened, I believe that the makers of British films have the integrity and the taste to produce a great religious picture. Give them the doctrine and imagination would do the rest.

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POTENTIALITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF THE CINEMA
AS A MEANS OF RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION

The mere fact that a film is of a religious nature will not of itself keep people away from the cinema. Such films have actually attracted large audiences in recent years. It must therefore be evident that, all else being equal, the potentialities for good of a religious film are very great. A great responsibility therefore rests upon Catholics who have any sort of capacity for assisting, directly or indirectly, in the production of films, so that full and effective use is made of these potentialities.

There are many and serious limitations which have to be taken into consideration in the use of this medium for religious purposes. A right use of terms in all such discussions is of considerable importance, and I should like first of all to refer to the word «EXPRESSION» in the title to this article.

When an artist is moved to some creative work, he is concerned with *expression*. By expression I mean the clothing, through the medium of his particular art, of an inspiration, in order that it may become a recognizable «thing» to the senses of hearing or of seeing. The general *impression* which may be made on others is, to himself, of comparatively insignificant importance. Hence, such an *expression* of his art, speaking generally, may be entirely a matter for self-gratification; it may be for the benefit of some particular person, or for a very specialized few. The artist can feel quite justified in ignoring all other considerations.

On the other hand, the primary concern of the cinema artist should be to create an *impression,* and the efficacy of his artistic expression will be judged as success or failure in view of the impression that is made upon his audience.

Hollywood is very conscious of the importance of this distinction, if only for the sake of the ultimate results in Box-Office returns. The distinction is of much more importance with regard to the production of religious films, or to religion *in* films, inasmuch as a permanent *impression* on the beholder should be the end aimed at.

The limitations of the cinema as a means of religious expression at once begin to become evident. There is, in the first place, the thought of those vast unknown audiences, watching and listening in the midst of an environment which, at the least, is not conducive to the building up of a religious impression. It is certainly a hot-bed for the stirring-up of the emotions, but that is not the aim of the religious film, or it shouldn't be! A friend of mine who is a Catholic in little but name, is an example of the ineffectiveness of an emotional re-action. As a result of seeing the film «BERNADETTE», he wrote a beautiful poem on Our Blessed Lady — but he did not go back to the Sacraments. However, it must be remembered that an inferior motive is not necessarily a bad one. Some sort of an appeal through the emotions may easily become the beginning of a movement towards higher things.

Another important limitation of that ultimate impression is concerned with the whole process of production, from the first conception of the religious inspiration to the completed «picture» ready for the screen. Producer, director, script and scenario writers, actors, etc.; each one is capable of marring, or possibly destroying, the religious impression which was the aim of the film. The movement of an eyelid, the accenting of a phrase, the mis-fit of even an insignificant part in the cast, the atmosphere of the set, etc. Such difficulties are innumerable. But that they may be overcome is obvious when one thinks of the production of those two outstanding religious films «VISITATION» and «MONSIEUR VINCENT». In both of these films a dominantly religious force was evidently in control from start to finish. Yet it must be remembered that even such a film as «MONSIEUR VINCENT» has produced its critics who have failed to receive that religious impression which was the prime motive of the film.

It must also be borne in mind that the ordinary cinema-goer has almost lost the capacity to *think* while he is watching the moving picture before him on the screen. Therefore there must be a

powerful incentive to break down his normal emotional reactions and make a lasting religious impression on his mind. Unless a religious film has this subtle power, and is of outstanding merit, it may be that there are greater potentialities for religion hidden in the ordinary non-religious film. What is wanted is to build up a series of impressions that religion can be a dominating influence in the normal person, and that it does not, and should not, lead to an obnoxious goody-goodiness, to eccentricity or to morbidity; neither to a flabbiness of will nor to the tight-lipped ascetic. But that it can, and does, develop and strengthen character, bring out personality, and give such a definite aim as to enable men and women to face up to and deal with the difficulties of life. They will not necessarily overcome them on the screen any more than they do in real life; but it can be shown how a true victory can be reached by a spiritual power of resistance which is interiorly irresistable. This is really the spirit of the film «MONSIEUR VINCENT»; but I have in mind the film which is not called «religious». The potentiality is there. It may be difficult to bring out, but it would be worth while.

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Religion and the screen*

About twenty years ago as I was walking down one of the main streets of one of our biggest cities, I met a friend of mine who was with a friend of his and we were introduced. If I met that man again I would not recognise him; nevertheless, there are two things about him which I remember vividly. I remember that he held a responsible position in the world of education, and that he made certain remarks about the cinema. How the cinema came into the conversation I cannot recollect, but even at this distance of years, I can visualize that ardent young man saying to me... "Some years ago I went to see a film... it was a Saturday afternoon and many children were present... the film was a most abominable one... and when I thought of the damage done to those innocent young souls, I walked out in protest and made a vow to the Almighty that never again would I enter a cinema, and (he added with dramatic finality) I've kept that vow».

I mention this tiny incident (tiny incidents often reveal tremendous truths) because that well intentioned man is representative of a school of thought which seems to believe that films and the Faith cannot mix, and that sin and the cinema walk hand in glove.

Inherently Good

To take such an attitude to the cinema is not only illogical, it is wrong. I am not sure that it does not run close to the Manichaean heresy. True, films can bring forth evil fruit, but whose fault is that: The wrong use of something which is inherently good does not make that thing become evil. Drugs may be used to kill or cure; atomic energy can be used to save the world or to destroy it; psycho-analysis can be used for a good purpose or a bad purpose; the drama, the ballet, literature, all our gifts, all our senses, can be used for a positive purpose or a negative purpose. Therefore, as my first point, I would emphasise the still only half-accepted truth that the cinema is a gift of God and that it is discourteous to run away from it, instead of embracing it "as a bearer of light and a positive guide to what is good". You who are attending this conference believe that films can be bearers of light, but there are many Catholics who do not share your belief. Not very long ago someone wrote to "Focus" complaining that priests who were reviewing films were doing the devil's work. (Devil a bit of it!) Another person, in a letter to "Focus", says, "There are many things which puzzle me in English Catholic life. I have returned after many years in Spain and find that Catholics in this country have become very materialistic. Cinemas and novels occupy their time, which should be used for gaining greater union with God. What is more puzzling is to find that priests, instead of directing souls, should waste time in films. I was amazed to read in "Focus" that there is a panel of priests doing this. One would have thought that it was bad enough to have a panel of lay-men, but priests...! Meeting film actors and actresses instead of helping souls to union with God! Then there are the reviews in "Focus". Instead of pointing out how

*) *Paper read at the Catholic Film Society Summer School, August 1948.*

harmful films are, they even suggest that people ought to see films they have already said are bad. For example, "V" having said that a film is not for general patronage, says that it may be seen by people of balanced minds! What does he mean? Surely a film that is not fit for ordinary people is not fit for anybody . . ."

Poets and the Cinema

To such negativists who see in films the mills of Satan slowly grinding the world to ruin, Pope Pius XI in his *"Vigilanti Cura"* has given this answer. "A force of such power and universality as the cinema can be directed with great utility to the highest ends of individual and social improvement. Why should there be a question of merely avoiding what is evil?" By some sort of queer spiritual colour blindness many people see the devil before they see God. In the last century it was the art of poetry which was regarded by many as the language of the devil; in this century it is the art of the cinema. Since the art of poetry is akin to the art of the cinema, it will be *ad rem* to quote what Francis Thompson said about poetry. I quote his words, because to my mind, they are a plea for the cinema.

"Beware how you misprise this potent ally, for hers is the art of Giotto and Dante: beware how you misprise this insidious foe, for hers is the art of modern France and of Byron. Her value, if you know it not, God knows, and know the enemies of God. If you have no room for her beneath the wings of the Holy One, there is a place for her beneath the webs of the Evil One: whom you discard, he embraces; whom you cast down from an honourable seat he will advance to a haughty throne; the brows you dislaurel of a just respect, he will bind with baleful splendours; the stone which the builders rejected, he will make the head of his corner . . . Eye her not askance if she seldom sings directly of God and religion: the bird gives glory to God though it sings only of its innocent loves . . . shelter her under the rafter of your faith; discipline her to the sweet restraints of your household, feed her with the meat from your table, soften her with the amity of your children, tame her, fondle her, cherish her — you will no longer then need to flee her. Suffer her to wanton, suffer her to play, so that she play round the foot of the Cross."

Pedlar of Ideas

There is a second type of person, more interesting and more logical than the one we have just discussed, who regards the cinema as a form of entertainment, and believes that as such it is outside the realm of religion. During the past years I have given some talks on the Church and the Cinema to various organisations, and I have been surprised to discover that many Catholics believe religion and the Cinema should exist in water-tight compartments. On one occasion, during discussion time, one person said to me: "Aren't you people of the *Catholic Film Society* giving films a false emphasis . . aren't you taking films from the realm of recreation and giving them an importance which they were never meant to have?" I replied that whatever expresses ideas, good, bad or indifferent, in an emotional manner takes itself from the realms of recreation and becomes an art form.

It is because the cinema is the great modern pedlar of ideas, that the Church has the right, indeed the duty, to guide, to guard and to mother it. Our Lord Jesus Christ has commissioned His Church to teach; though old she is ever new; she moves with the times and uses the most up-to-date methods of teaching her lessons. "Good motion pictures" says Pope Pius XI "are capable of exercising a profoundly moral influence upon those who see them . . . they are able to arouse noble ideas of life, to communicate valuable conceptions, to impart a better knowledge of the history and beauties of the father-land and of other countries, to present truth and beauty and virtue under attractive forms, to create or at least to favour understanding among nations, social classes and races, to champion the cause of justice, to give new life to the claims of virtue, and to contribute positively to the genesis of a just social order in the world."

What constitutes a good film?

From those words it is clear that it is the duty of the Church to help to educate the cinema to produce films which conform with the best standards of art, culture and religion. It is when films do conform with these standards that we get such films as "HAMLET", "MONSIEUR VINCENT", "FARREBIQUE", "VISITATION", "ROMA CITTA APERTA" *(Open City)*, and "QUATRO PASSI TRA LE NUVOLE" *(Four Steps in the clouds)*.

It is high time that we accepted the principle that any film which accords with Christian principles of art culture is a good film. The cowl does not make the monk. The presence of monks, priests and nuns or little boys in cassocks, looking up with pious eyes to heaven, does not make a religious film. Churchy films are seldom good films. "FARREBIQUE" is one of the best and the most religious films I have ever seen. In this film poem there is no heavy moralising, no artificial sermonising; as far as I can remember there is no mention of the name of God; nevertheless, such a parallel is drawn between the four seasons of the year and the four seasons of the physical, moral and spiritual life of the people that live on the farm, that God and His wonderful works are revealed in a most appealing manner. "HAMLET", too, is a good film, because it is informed with a Christian philosophy, it carries a sense of the supernatural, and the doctrines of prayer, devotion to Our Lady, the effect of sin, the reality of the future life are more than suggested. The great religious film "MONSIEUR VINCENT", which is in a class all its own, has proved that when a religious film is also a good film, it is wanted and is good box office.

Our Forefathers' Footsteps

For a long time now the materialists have been using films to indoctrinate the world with their false creeds. "If you wish to change the thought of the world", said Lenin, "you must do so by means of the theatre and the cinema."

The times in which we live demand that we do not sit down and fiddle while the Christian heritage and culture burn.

We should remember that the Catholic Church was using the moving pictures of her stained glass windows, her statues, her dramas, her miracle plays and pageants and processions, long before the coming of the talkies.

Are we afraid to step in where our forefathers did not fear to tread?

Declan Flynn, O. F. M.

THE TRAGEDY OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

PROVIDES AN ETERNAL SUBJECT FOR THE CINEMA

Charles Ford, film critic and historian of the cinema, author of many works including "THE BREVIARY OF THE CINEMA", "SHOOTING, MONDAY", and, in collaboration with René Jeanne "HISTORY OF THE CINEMA", is particularly well qualified to summarize the attempts made by film producers to portray the figure of Our Lord.

We live at the present time in a world divided in two. I apologise for uttering such a truism, but it is not without its bearing on the world of films. The division with which we are concerned here is not political in essence but spiritual. On one side of the globe materialism has outstripped spiritual progress; is it so very surprising if on the other side a fairly appreciable reaction is making itself felt? And how typical of this reaction is the fact that never since the early days of films has there been so vast or so rich a production of works of religious inspiration. The practically world-wide success of "MONSIEUR VINCENT" may have startled us at first but we do not find it surprising now that we see it in perspective. In the available forecasts of current activity in the American studios there is announced the production in the near future of fifty films treating of religious themes, and of these six will be devoted more or less entirely to the Life of Christ. Moreover, the sound version of the celebrated Cecil B. de Mille picture, the "KING OF KINGS", is reported from Los Angeles to be having a remarkable success. And in France, following "MONSIEUR VINCENT", "DOCTEUR LAENNEC", ,"LE SOURCIER DU CIEL", and "DOCTEUR LOUISE", the most intriguing of film producers Abel Gance, is engaged on the preparatory work of "THE DIVINE TRAGEDY".

So, after more than fifty years' existence, the cinema is taking up again the most tragic story in world history. It is a story which, like many another, is intimately bound up with the four great periods of cinematic history. The Life of Our Lord has been brought to the screen several times — first in the early years, later in the maturity of the silent film, again in the first phase of the talking-film and finally to-day the theme recurs again. The Arts have at all times taken inspiration as regards their primary manifestations from religious beliefs. The Cinema is no exception to the rule and turned to religion immediately it was born. In France, birthplace of the film, in Italy and in the United States, the countries which were the first great producers of films along with France, the Passion of Our Lord was one of the subjects first brought to the screen. To say that the first efforts in this direction were artistic successes would certainly be a travesty of the truth, but it still remains true that these films had perforce to be made if the secular demand was to be satisfied. One of the first technical experiments of Georges Méliès was the making of a "CHRIST WALKING ON THE WAVES", and as at this time competition between producers was fierce, this initial film of Méliès immediately provided the making of two films of greater importance by Ferdinand Zecca in the Pathé studios: the "PASSION OF CHRIST" and the "LIFE OF JESUS". Though technically speaking rather crude, these pictures were highly popular, and even to-day, surprising to relate, they are still shown in some of the missions in Oceania, though they date from 1902. They certainly have the merit of identifying themselves remarkably with the conception that ordinary audiences have of the Sacred Characters. A few years after Zecca's efforts Armand Bour produced for the Film d'Art "THE JUDAS KISS" which was privileged to have a cast containing the greatest actors of the time: Albert Lambert, Our Lord and Mounet-Sully, Judas. An interesting detail concerns the part of St. John: the role was played in this film by a fledgeling actor, Albert Dieudonné, who was eventually to portray Abel Gance's "NAPOLEON".

Side by side with the primary efforts of this kind in France, those of Italy were being made. Luigi Topi, owner of one of the first cinematographic theatres in Rome, could not let the Christmas and New Year celebrations of 1897 pass without attempting a "PASSION OF JESUS": for this production be engaged a conjurer named Fremio, a rival of the famous Fregoli. It would be both useless and naive to conceal that at the bottom the basiness instinct was much more powerful than considerations of a more spiritual order: but, nevertheless, the fact that a successful business man like Luigi Topi entrusted the task op personifying Christ to Fremio in preference to any other actor proves incontestably the irresistible attraction of the public towards this type of spectacle. Unconsciously perhaps, the

people — not merely the Italian people but those of the whole Christian world — felt themselves drawn towards the novel spectacle that permitted them to give concrete shape to abstract notions of Divinity. Topi's "PASSION OF JESUS" mated photographs, whereas "CHRISTUS", made several years later was a true film — a film, incidentally, that had a world-wide showing. Based on a scenario by Fausto Salvatori and produced by Giuseppe de Liguoro and Giulio Antamoro, "CHRISTUS" belongs to the group of great Italian productions which for several years deluded us into believing in an Italian Cinematic Art. The truth is that with their inordinate use of extras and operatic settings, these productions had everything that was then needed to achieve popularity. Let us be careful not to judge this type of film too severely, particularly as their intentions were pure and — particularly in "CHRISTUS" — the casts were cleverly chosen. Alberto Pasquali played Our Lord, Leda Gys, Mary Magdalen, and the great Amleto Novelli drew an unforgettable portrait of Pontius Pilate.

Nobody will be surprised to learn — least of all as concerns this primitive period of cinema history — that it is in the United States that we encounter religious films made entirely for mercenary considerations. As in France and in Italy religious subjects were the first to benefit from a wider conception of the film. At a time when the two principal combines, *Edison* and *Biograph*, were engaged in a merciless commercial war, independent producers decided to cash in by making pseudo-religious films. Hurd, the representative in America of Louis Lumière, persuaded two theatrical impresarios, Klaw and Erlanger to go to Europe and make a "PASSION" after the style of the one which is put on every ten years at Oberammergau. The film, costing ten thousand dollars, achieved such a success that it became the object of many imitations, Hollaman, manager of a New York waxworks, had a new "PASSION" made — on the roof of the Grand Central Palace in the heart of New-York. Theatrical stars portrayed, anonymously, the principal characters: their names were revealed later. Frank Russell was Our Lord, Frank Caylor, Judas, and Richard Strong, Pontius Pilate. This "PASSION OF OUR LORD" (1898) was followed by a third version, made in Philadelphia by Siegmunt Lugin. The three versions had a great success, especially Hollaman's, which was sold at 850 dollars a copy.

The great period of the silent film was to see the birth of two major works devoted entirely to the life of Christ. First came "INRI", a German film made by Robert Wiene, then the "KING OF KINGS", an American film made by Cecil B. de Mille. Robert Wiene's production has often been accused of a certain coldness: it was plain that the creator of cinema expressionism did not feel quite at ease in filming the life of Our Lord. There is a deep gulf between the "CABINET OF DR. GALIGARI" and the Passion! However, he did show a superb mastery in the composition of many scenes which stand out as landmarks in this story of Christ's progress from Crib to Calvary. In particular, Wiene composed an admirable transcription of the Resurrection scene with tableaux à la Rembrandt. Besides this, "INRI" boasted an excellent cast comprising Gregory Chmara, a truly tragic and moving figure of Christ, Werner Krauss, an astounding Pontius Pilate, Henny Porten as the Virgin, Asta Nielsen as Mary Magdalen and Emmanuel Reicher, a Caiphas of power. Even if "INRI" was not to satisfy everybody, it could not be denied that it was the first purely artistic transposition of the Passion to the screen. Scarcely three years after Robert Wiene's production came Cecil B. de Mille's briliant "KING OF KINGS". Each of these productions represents a typical example of the tendencies of the cinema in its country of origin. Wiene's effort possessed an indisputable pictorial value, as well as a certain heaviness, typically German, and withal a finish in the acting. "THE KING OF KINGS" startled by the lavishness of the production, and brought to view the notorious de Mille faults of artificiality and speciousness. Yet these faults were counterbalanced by superb settings, by crowd scenes of the kind that de Mille has been making for years now, and by so simple an approach that the film was destined, even before its release to the public, for the greatest success. H. B. Warner portrayed Our Lord in a manner which owes more to the Anglo-Saxon conception than to the Latin, which is why, probably, its success was not total except in the Protestant countries. With him were Victor Varconi — a Pontius Pilate more conspicuous for elegance than for weakness, Dorothy Cummings, who played Our Lady, and Jacqueline Logan, who played Mary Magdalen. Old Rudolph Schildkraut drew a triking portrait of Caiphas, while his son Joseph played Judas in flagrant defiance of all established tradition. In effect, Judas was represented in the de Mille production as a handsome and attractive young man; as against this, Ernest Torrence played St. Peter somewhat after the style that other actors gave to Judas. Highly debatable notions, but not without originality.

Before I go on to the films of the Passion made during the talkie period, this seems a suitable pace to recall to mind the fleeting appearances of Our Lord in two American films of unequal worth: the "PRODIGAL SON", directed by Raoul Walsh, and "BEN HUR", directed by Fred Niblo. In the former, an unnamed actor traced a distant silhouette in the Last Supper scene, while Fred Niblo's portrayal of Christ remains a classic in the history of the cinema. A character who is scarcely seen at all, he yet dominates by his spirituality the whole of this famous novel of Lew Wallace, as transposed to the screen by Fred Niblo on a gigantic scale. Following a laudable desire for restraint, the director avoided showing Our Lord's face and merely suggested His presence by a shadow, by a part of an arm or clothing, and by the reactions of the other characters. Notwithstanding the undisputed talent of the various interpreters of the part on the screen, I do not think that any portrayal of the Son of God has caused as much discussion as this almost unseen but powerfully suggestive characterisation.

From the moment when the screen began to speak, the cinematographic evocation of the figure of Christ became still more difficult and indeed almost dangerous. A picture, even an imperfectly drawn picture, still allows free play to the imagination, but the sound of a voice brutally curtails any imaginative excursion. It is therefore, not unreasonable to presume that it is because of this new and practtically insurmountable obstacle that the film companies have to some extent given up the Life of Christ since the talkie recovution. If one discounts the very short, silent portrayal of Christ by Abel Gance (he played the part himself) in the prologue to the "END OF THE WORLD", and if one cites only for the purposes of record the rather disappointing Mexican production of "MARY MAGDALEN", presented recently with Luis Alcoriza as Our Lord and Medea de Nouara as Mary Magdalen, one

finds but a single film that re-enacts in full vigour the drama of the Divine Passion: Julien Duvivier's "GOLGOTHA". Directed with a use of the fullest technical resources which possibly obscured the spiritual significance of the work, this film aroused several controversies which today have lost much of their keenness. A little cold, like all this director's work, with a very obvious predominance of form over matter, "GOLGOTHA" is, nevertheless, a work of the first-class, noteworthy especially for Harry Baur's gripping portrayal of Hérod. As for the character of Our Lord, Duvivier found in Robert Le Vigan an actor unsurpassed in angelic sweetness and rarely equalled in emotional power. There was also the miracle of his voice. None of those who saw "GOLGOTHA" can forget its warmth. His "Verily, I say to you" still rings in our ears like celestial music. What a pity that this splendid film should have been marred by grave errors which put it hopelessly beyond the pale !

At the present time we are witnessing a definite renaissance of the religious film in opposition to the works of te materialist and neo-realist schools. In the United States, the portrayal of Our Lord's Passion will hold an important place in film production, if the publicity from the studios is to be believed. In Europe, we must wait patiently, in pleasant anticipation, for Abel Gance's forthcoming production "THE DIVINE TRAGEDY". May this great director be inspired by grace: may he offer to the world the true masterpiece which will put the cinema on an equal footing with the other arts. Those arts have many times in the past paid brilliant homage to the Divine Passion, a subject eternally tragic, the inspiration of the greatest architects, painters and musicians; will Abel Gance be the screen's Leonardo da Vinci ?

Charles Ford.

MAX JACOB AND THE CHRIST OF THE SCREEN

Julian Green has an entry in his diary as follows: 19th January 1942; a long conversation the other day with Père C... He spoke to me of Max Jacob who became converted whilst in a cinema.. by seeing an apparition of Christ on the Screen.

This passage has sometimes been abused by being quoted as if a simple representation of Christ on the screen was involved although it really seems that Max Jacob believed he had witnessed a real and supernatural apparition which had not necessarly any relation to the film which was being shown.

According to André Billy he had already had a vision of Christ when on December 16th 1914 he went to a cinema where a film by Paul Féval called "THE COMPANY IN BLACK HABITS" was being shown. Christ appeared to him on the screen, sheltering in his white cloak the housekeeper's four children in whose welfare Jacob was interested himself.

Max Jacob has described what happened in a poem entitled

"I hold Thee to witness, Lord"...

There I was, grown up full of good sense and wisdom
Then Thou came — once in my own house
And a second time in a cinema
"So you go to the Pictures"
My confessor asked, with a surprised expression
"Why not, Father — didn't Our Lord come there?"

Max Jacobs edifying end leaves us with the duty of preserving the story in its rigorous authencity.

J. M.

Jules DESURMONT
Director of Cine-Selection, PARIS

A SHAPER OF MORALS WHO IS UNAWARE OF HIS POWER

the Distributor

The man who goes to the cinema is at once aware that two major professions have collaborated for his delectation: those of producer and exhibitor.

He is quite unaware that a third profession, that of film distribution, has been the link between these two.

The cinema industry here follows the rule of all commercial enterprise: production — distribution — consumption.

Film making is a profession which calls for a familiarity with banking and artistic circles, a knowledge of special methods and technique. It often entails the organisation of a financial syndicate. Ability to co-ordinate the efforts of the creative artists, to blend the thousand and one elements that make up a film, is essential. As Pagnol said in "SCHPOUNTZ", the producer is the which binds the scattered branches into one bundle.

Once completed, the film makes its way all over the world, the conditions of its exhibition bearing no relation to costs. It is sold, or rather rented, in the interests of the producer by an agent who is called the *distributor*.

The distributor does not need the qualifications of the director, but he needs others. He must have an intimate knowledge of the markets of the country with which he is concerned; he must know when saturation point has been reached or when what he is trying to sell has a scarcity value, for its value depends entirely upon the law of supply and demand. He must organize regional offices in which agents will work under his direction. His salesmen must have, above all, a psychological instinct which will enable them to pick the best candidates and sell their unequal wares at the best prices in unstable conditions. Finally the distributor organises publicity, services copies and collects the monies that will have to be distributed in accordance with the producer's instructions or the mortgages which form the backing of the film.

For his work he receives a commission which is fixed by contract.

It might be thought that it would be more economical to do away with the intermediary and to deliver direct from producer to consumer. This would not be impossible, although the cares of distribution would be harmful to the work of the director. But any attempt of this kind has become very difficult to-day, for it is not possible for the average producer to make a film without including the future distributor in the financial combine which he has to build up. In effect, this producer is always in need of much ready money, or of credits guaranteed by the distributor.

In France, the *Credit National Bank* itself will only lend to producers if a formal guarantee of payment of receipts, at a time and in a country specified, is forthcoming from the distributor.

The distributor's role is, therefore, of primary importance.

From being merely a cog in the machinery of the film industry, he becomes the person who makes possible or prevents the production of a film.

Is this economic imperative a good thing?

We sincerely believe that it is. The distributor is, at least potentially, the regulator of the film market. It is within his power to urge the producer on or to check him. He can judge better than any banking firm whether the moment is ripe for launching a new star or risking a film that is outside the accepted formula.

The distributor, therefore, gives or witholds impetus. What can result from this? It must be admitted that, in fact, the majority of distributors determine their attitude solely in the light of the eventual commercial value of a film. Their action does not always have the desired effect, for a film is the work of a team. Its fate is dependent upon the reception it gets from the public, and the work on it, therefore, is always done in a state of uncertainty, as is the case with all artistic creation. Let us agree, then, that the distributor has an important influence without being as responsible for the work as the producer. Often enough the importance of the distributor's support is borne out by the cast-list; that is to say by the interpretation of the film, which, in its turn, will determine its eventual success or failure.

The motives which guide distributors are rarely of a moral order. In France, nevertheless, we hail the success of the firm *Ciné-Selection* — so far as we know the only distributing house which has inscribed in its statutes an acceptance of the "moral classifications" of the *Centrale Catholique du Cinéma et de la Radio*. Since the liberation this limited liability company has increased its capital from 1 to 36,000,000 French francs. Its prestige is high in the French cinema industry. Its receipts of 180,000,000 fr. fr. in 1948 place it in the first flight of the independent distributors and its large credit as well as excellent services attract the serious producers.

It is not our place to sing the praises of one firm as opposed to any other, but it gives me pleasure, in concluding this article, to remark on the value of

Ciné Selection. Can a distributing company which observes the normal rules of business, while at the same time pledging itself not to assist in making immoral films, prosper and make itself felt? Can it hope to keep abreast with competitors? In France *Ciné Selection* has given striking proof that the *distributor* could, without any risk, become a shaper of morals.

Jules Desurmont

John BOULTING
Producer, Director

John Boulting is one of the most interesting of the younger group of British cineastes. With his twin brother, Roy, he has been responsible for such outstanding films as "PASTOR HALL", "THUNDER ROCK", "BRIGHTON ROCK",etc. He brings to the making of films a markedly individual, independent outlook. His remarks on the responsibility of the cineaste in the excellent article which follows, are, therefore, all the more valuable. Perhaps, for the sake of some readers who may be puzzled by his use of such terms as "conscience" and "morality" it should be pointed out that, since he does not share our Faith, his definition of such terms is somewhat less precise than we are accustomed to. However the attentive study of this and other similar articles will reveal the profound basic agreement which so often is found to exist between the views of film philosophers from another school and our own point of view as filmologists.

THE FILM

CONSCIENCE AND ÆSTHETIC FREEDOM

An idea firmly rooted in the mind of the general public is that of the artist completely absorbed in his work and willing to sell his soul and, if needs be, his fellow-men, for the sake of his aesthetic freedom. In the public imagination, Nero not only fiddled while Rome burned, but has continued to do so ever since. Thus, prejudice might hold, conscience has no part in the artist's mental make-up. Whatever restraint he might exercise is imposed from without rather than from within.

This conception, of course, is romantic: it is also untrue. When the artist claims to be creating beauty, there is something within him that urges him to do so, a purpose, a truth that he wants to convey to others. No man is without conscience, however weak and undeveloped it may be; and in the case of the artist this conscience is very much alive, though it finds expression in various forms.

If this problem was ever present with the individual artist, practising in more restricted fields, how much more acute is it for those who work in the universal medium of the film. Glittering prizes have attracted into the arena people who are at an equal distance from the arts and from a conscience, and reject such considerations as irrelevant to the supreme purpose of making money. Yet the conclusion cannot be shirked that the film maker bears a heavy responsibility before society, for the film, forgive the platitude — continues to be one of the most profound conditioning forces in the world today. The film maker's conscience, therefore, is ever seeking to reconcile the claims of his obligations to society with the necessity for his adjustment to the material structure of his art-cum-industry.

What is this conscience that lines the springs of the artist's imagination?

Is it not the faculty of distinguishing between right and wrong, and acting upon it? Possibly. But if it is difficult to live by such a standard, how much more difficult is it to apply in the field of aesthetic expression with its innumberable subtleties and overtones. The only reasonable way in which we can relate conscience to aesthetic expression is by seeking its motive.

In the face of some of the factors that aid or hinder the making of films, to stand up for the promptings of conscience requires great courage some of the time, but inflexible resolve all of the time. This resolve will be perceived in the choice of subject, in the construction of the story and in the treatment of character. With these foundations laid, the freedom of aesthetic expression will not be in conflict with the film maker's conscience, other than in the case of the "trick", the facile invention designed to cover up weakness in story or performance.

Conscience will always operate to direct attention to the essential character of the work in hand, if the film maker remains true to that, the aesthetic side will look after itself.

"Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all" is not a dogma, it is a challenge. Only the narrow, the unimaginative and the timid will devitalize his work at the dictate of conscience.

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The Anonymus chosen by Abel Gance for "THE DIVINE TRAGEDY"

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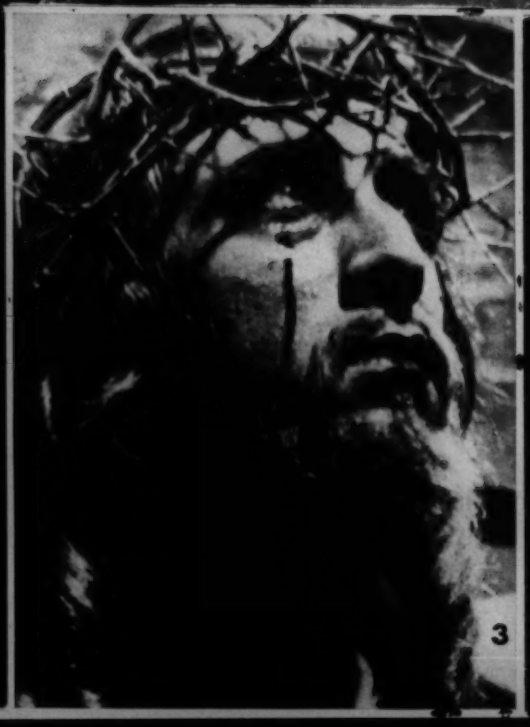

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1. *The Passion of Christ* by Zecca (1905) 2. Gregory Chmara in "*INRI*" by Robert Wienne. 3. Abel Gance in his film *The end of the World* (La Fin du Monde, 1927). 4. H.B. Warner in *The King of Kings* (1926). 5. *The King of Kings* by C.B. De Mille

Christ as portrayed in the silent cinema

But there are other inhibiting influences at work. The very universality of the film medium constricts its development. Censorship is the public assistance board to the still small voice, and operates with a characteristic lack of subtlety and imagination. In seeking to protect public morals, it only too frequently corrupts the film maker's sincerity and the film-goer's taste. Too often its codes are drawn to crucify the honest and unconventional, but leave untouched the salacious, the sniggering and the meretricious.

It is true, of course, that the public, from time to time, will misinterpret the film maker's intention, and the censor may claim that he is there to anticipate such misunderstandings, and to proclaim the proximity of thin ice. He is, understandably but regrettably, on the side of the big battalions, the vigilance of public emotion constantly on the prowl against the original and unexpected. His form of conscience is a collective entity and represses the individual conscience whose functioning has been the spur of man's intellectual and moral development.

It is deplorable that the officially appointed censors do not appear to have grasped the fact that, in the case of every genuine film maker, his own conscience is the most reliable form of censorship. Whilst censorship remains in its present form, the cinema will continue to appear to many first-class minds, a second-class medium.

To the end of time, conscience will remain a singularly private affair. And film making will continue to be, we hope, a very public occupation. It seems unlikely, therefore, that we can expect an ultimate reconciliation between the film maker with a conscience, individuals and groups who wish to impose their own, and those who will have neither. The drama of the cinema's conscience, I am afraid, will continue to be based upon this eternal triangle.

John Boulting

Campbell **DIXON**
Film Critic "Daily Telegraph" Author, Essayist. London

THE TRAIL OF THE SLUG

It is a truism that the film's power to influence opinion and character is enormous. Does anyone honestly believe that that power is always, or even often, excercised wisely?

Oh, I know the usual answers — that on the screen, as in the bloodthirsty thrillers read by small boys, right generally triumphs, the virtuous are rewarded, the wicked punished, and so on. I am not one of those credulous persons who swallow the plea of every youngster brought before the magistrate, "Please, sir, I saw it on the pictures." I may be biassed, for obvious reasons, but I really don't believe a blood-lust was implanted in me by the youthful reading of works with such lines as I can remember still: "Wild Bill's rifle spoke, and another Redskin bit the dust."

Nor (if I may again be personal, just to indicate my point of view) do I think any sins and follies I have committed were due to the free run of a library containing such standard works as Shakespeare's plays, "EUGENIE GRANDET", "MADAME BOVARY" and "TOM JONES", of which Taine remarks mildly that Fielding's heroines are charming, but he cannot help wishing that their petticoats were not lifted quite so often. The second novel I read, at the age of nine, was Thomas Hardy's "JUDE THE OBSCURE" — then (though I didn't know it) on the banned list at London's circulating libraries. My only reaction to scenes denounced as immoral was, I remember, one of puritanical disgust, just as reading "SAPHO", ten years later, gave me a strong and permanent prejudice against professional charmers like the heroine.

Nevertheless, I believe that some films do harm the adolescent charater.

Is this one of those arguments, not uncommon, that freedom is good for me, because I'm a strong-minded fellow, but you need careful watching, because you are very susceptible and might easily go to the devil? No. I am all in favour of freedom and truth for everybody, provided the freedom is not licence and the truth is unvarnished. Vice, wrote that not very lofty moralist but shrewd observer, Alexander Pope:

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien
As to be hated, needs but to be seen.

Exactly. But not if it is seen by glamorous moonshine, in *Technicolor*. Dress it up and romanticise it, and for many people it assumes the fascination it had for Swinburne, the brilliant permanent adolescent, intoxicating himself and a youthful generation with wonderful rolling rhetoric about "the lilies and languors of virtue, the roses and raptures of vice."

And this, I think, is precisely what the film, the *average* film, tends to do. Is it concerned with the heroine's virtue, then what do we find? A girl of average looks and intelligence undergoing the usual

temptation in the usual conditions — selfish youth or unscrupulous older man, probably a little alcohol, a sordid room, tears, disillusionment and either bitter regret or a speedy hardening of character?

Not at all. Lively young heroine meets romantic young hero — or perhaps a great man, more mature, even more fascinating, with his talent, his career, his charm and the becoming touches of grey above his ears. They fall in love; they decide that "we need each other", that "it can't be wrong to love as we do"; they step into a plane or a yacht or a Rolls-Royce; and there they are in the next shot, incredibly happy and gay somewhere in Mexico or on the Riviera.

"So *that's* what love really means!" murmurs the shopgirl, ecstatically eyeing the heroine's pearls and frocks, the champagne and iced peaches, the royal suite and the lover's enchanting manners. Nothing so luxurious and exotic will ever come her way, of course, but no doubt there will be substitutes — an invitation from the boss, perhaps, for a cosy week-end at Margate or Dieppe. And if the glamorous heroine of the screen can do it, and win happiness and admiration in the end, why should the poor shopgirl or stenographer miss all the fun and romance in life?

That, at least, is how the movie-trained generation is apt to reason. For millions of young people religious training is sketchy or lacking altogether; the war convinced them that ability to survive is all that matters; the great virtue is "toughness"; the only law is the jungle law, take what you want.

The workings of this philosophy are shown, frankly and brutally in "LE DIABLE AU CORPS". In that clever film, described by even a broadminded French critic as *terriblement scabreux,* the 16-year-old hero shows no respect for the moral law, for his parents, or for the fairplay due to a soldier in the trenches. As a-moral as an animal, he only hopes the war will last for ever so that he may go on living with the soldier's wife. He is punished in the end, you say? Oh, yes. The young woman is unlucky enough to have a child by him and die giving birth to it. And the moral? Thousands of adolescents have doubtless supplied it for themselves. They agree, with a smile and a wink, that the boy and his chère amie must have been deplorably careless.

The screen's defence, of course — and it is a very powerful one — is that Art, to have any validity, must face the facts of life. Prudishness is fatal. Granted. But when it comes to sexual morals, that is just what the screen does not do. The pill is always sugar-coated.

But why do I talk of sexual morals at all? Heaven knows I am no moralist. If anyone raises the old cry of British hypocrisy my only defence is that I happen to be father of two very small girls, and life has convinced me that they cannot hope to be reasonably happy if they are not also reasonably good. Not a very lofty basis of morality, I agree: but if, unhappily, they should prove unable to love virtue for its own sake, even a virtue based on a pragmatic hedonism, to put it at its lowest, is better than none at all.

With two other charges against the screen — charges of brutality and vulgarity — I feel rather better qualified to deal. Before me lies a newspaper with the familiar headline, *"Canadian Censor will Cut Brutal Scenes"* — one of countless protests against the wave of sadism that has swept across the burning screen. An Italian film, "CITTA APERTA", showed Germans burning out a man's eyes with a blow-lamp; in England there has been disgusting nonsense like "NO ORCHIDS FOR MISS BLANDISH"; Hollywood indulges in beatings up and butchery to such an extent that one of the current favorites, Burt Lancaster, has practically waded through blood to the movie throne.

Such crude stuff may derive, on the literary side, from the blood-and-thunder yarns of childhood, and are often dismissed by optimists as of no more consequence. They forget, I think, that the impact of the screen is incomparably greater, and that the effect on young and foolish minds, not to mention the moronic minds of the potential criminal, must be infinitely more serious.

I mentioned vulgarity. Aesthetically, that is perhaps the greatest tragedy of all. Some of our film manufacturers, absorbed in a frenzied effort to keep their wares rolling off the assembly line, find it good business to flatter their patrons: besides many of them probably share their cruder patrons' tastes.

The result is that cheapening of values, that blind admiration of wealth and notoriety however gained, that obsession with material things ranging from cars and juke-boxes to frigidaires and cosmetics, on which the inhabitants of the screen world build a precarious happiness. In the Century of the Common Man a Henry Ford is more admired than Newton; any composer of jazz or swing, if he made a million out of it, is a greater genius than a Mozart who died in poverty. "FOREVER AMBER" having sold a million copies, must be a much better book than "LA COUSINE BETTE"; practically anyone who chatters of functionalism and uses steel, concrete and glass is a finer architect than a Palladio whose columns serve no purpose but to look beautiful.

I could analyse films, give details; but what's the use? The reader must know them as well as I do. Technically and dramatically, the screen has done many brilliant things. Culturally, despite the occasional masterpiece or near-masterpiece, it has left a smear across the landscape of our age like that of some gigantic slug.

Campbell Dixon

THE POPE SPEAKS THROUGH TELEVISION

We have asked Jean-Pierre C h a r t i e r, Director of the film, "THE POPE AND THE BIRTH OF TELEVISION" to write for us about his impressions when filming the scenes in the Vatican and to tell us the purpose he has in view in making the film.

Following an official request to the Vatican, His Holiness Pius XII consented to deliver a message destined for viewers of French television. As there is still no transmitting station at the Vatican this message and the short commentary which precedes it were recorded to be retransmitted on Easter Sunday over the Eiffel Tower aerial. Father P i c h a r d, who is in charge of religious programmes for French radio and television, organised this feature which marks an important date in the history of French television and also in the life of the Church, since it is the first time that a Pope has been able to achieve direct contact with the faithful by entering the intimacy of their homes. M. C r a v e r i, one of the foremost Italian cameramen, agreed to place his great skill at the service of this enterprise.

It was a strange sight to see one of the large audience chambers of the Vatican transformed for several hours into a studio, the rails of a mobile camera laid on the carpet facing the papal throne and projectors crowding the room. Accompanied only by Count G a l e a z z i, head of the Vatican Internal Affairs, Pius XII on entering did not seem in the least astonished by the unusual appearance of an audience during which ten or so technicians and workmen in working clothes where bustling round as though on a set. Speaking French with the greatest ease, although with a slight accent, His Holiness showed great interest in the transmission and asked numerous questions about it. In the course of the conversation which he had with the technicians everyone was struck by the Holy Father's simplicity and by the expression of extreme goodness and great intelligence which emanates from his face and conversation. The message which he delivered before the camera stresses the importance which the Holy Father attaches to television. He emphasized that this first message marks a date in the history of the Church, fifteen years after the first message broadcast by Pius XI. No-one connected professionally with the cinema can remain unmoved by the Holy Father's interest in the new technical medium from which he expects, in his own words, "consequences of the highest importance as a result of the ever more striking revelation of truth to loyal minds."

It would be regrettable if these contemporary words of the Holy Father were to be reserved to viewers of television only. This message, therefore, will be reproduced in the film "THE POPE AND THE BIRTH OF TELEVISION", which will include shots of the Pope talking informally to the technicians after the recording of the message. The film will recall briefly the beginnings of religious transmissions by French television. Midnight Mass at Notre Dame, the first Mass to be televised, the presentation of television to the Cardinals and Archbishops of France, the ordination ceremony which took place in the Carmelite Chapel on Holy Saturday will serve to introduce a short visit to the Vatican and the words of the Pope.

This film will show to all the new possibilities which television offers to those who wish to share in the life of the Church. Soon the world will be able to contemplate time itself in which the manifestations of Catholic life will be unfolded. But in order that the world may see, in the words of Pius XII, "the crowds flocking from all sides of the huge square of St. Peter's to receive the Pope's blessing and hear his words", it will be necessary to equip the Vatican with a transmitter. The Cardinals and Archbishops of France have undertaken to offer this transmitter to the Holy Father on the occasion of the Holy Year. In this film French Catholics will be able to see Father Pichard giving this news to His Holiness. They can be proud to think that it is to them that the Holy Father has addressed his first televised message, and that it is thanks to them that he will henceforward be able to say to all Catholics, "May our glance and yours meet for the first time in an exchange of paternal and filial affection."

Jean-Pierre Chartier

temptation in the usual conditions — selfish youth or unscrupulous older man, probably a little alcohol, a sordid room, tears, disillusionment and either bitter regret or a speedy hardening of character?

Not at all. Lively young heroine meets romantic young hero — or perhaps a great man, more mature, even more fascinating, with his talent, his career, his charm and the becoming touches of grey above his ears. They fall in love; they decide that "we need each other", that "it can't be wrong to love as we do"; they step into a plane or a yacht or a Rolls-Royce; and there they are in the next shot, incredibly happy and gay somewhere in Mexico or on the Riviera.

"So *that's* what love really means!" murmurs the shopgirl, ecstatically eyeing the heroine's pearls and frocks, the champagne and iced peaches, the royal suite and the lover's enchanting manners. Nothing so luxurious and exotic will ever come her way, of course, but no doubt there will be substitutes — an invitation from the boss, perhaps, for a cosy week-end at Margate or Dieppe. And if the glamorous heroine of the screen can do it, and win happiness and admiration in the end, why should the poor shopgirl or stenographer miss all the fun and romance in life?

That, at least, is how the movie-trained generation is apt to reason. For millions of young people religious training is sketchy or lacking altogether; the war convinced them that ability to survive is all that matters; the great virtue is "toughness"; the only law is the jungle law, take what you want.

The workings of this philosophy are shown, frankly and brutally in "LE DIABLE AU CORPS". In that clever film, described by even a broadminded French critic as *terriblement scabreux,* the 16-year-old hero shows no respect for the moral law, for his parents, or for the fairplay due to a soldier in the trenches. As a-moral as an animal, he only hopes the war will last for ever so that he may go on living with the soldier's wife. He is punished in the end, you say? Oh, yes. The young woman is unlucky enough to have a child by him and die giving birth to it. And the moral? Thousands of adolescents have doubtless supplied it for themselves. They agree, with a smile and a wink, that the boy and his chère amie must have been deplorably careless.

The screen's defence, of course — and it is a very powerful one — is that Art, to have any validity, must face the facts of life. Prudishness is fatal. Granted. But when it comes to sexual morals, that is just what the screen does not do. The pill is always sugar-coated.

But why do I talk of sexual morals at all? Heaven knows I am no moralist. If anyone raises the old cry of British hypocrisy my only defence is that I happen to be father of two very small girls, and life has convinced me that they cannot hope to be reasonably happy if they are not also reasonably good. Not a very lofty basis of morality, I agree: but if, unhappily, they should prove unable to love virtue for its own sake, even a virtue based on a pragmatic hedonism, to put it at its lowest, is better than none at all.

With two other charges against the screen — charges of brutality and vulgarity — I feel rather better qualified to deal. Before me lies a newspaper with the familiar headline, *"Canadian Censor will Cut Brutal Scenes"* — one of countless protests against the wave of sadism that has swept across the burning screen. An Italian film, "CITTA APERTA", showed Germans burning out a man's eyes with a blow-lamp; in England there has been disgusting nonsense like "NO ORCHIDS FOR MISS BLANDISH"; Hollywood indulges in beatings up and butchery to such an extent that one of the current favorites, Burt Lancaster, has practically waded through blood to the movie throne.

Such crude stuff may derive, on the literary side, from the blood-and-thunder yarns of childhood, and are often dismissed by optimists as of no more consequence. They forget, I think, that the impact of the screen is incomparably greater, and that the effect on young and foolish minds, not to mention the moronic minds of the potential criminal, must be infinitely more serious.

I mentioned vulgarity. Aesthetically, that is perhaps the greatest tragedy of all. Some of our film manufacturers, absorbed in a frenzied effort to keep their wares rolling off the assembly line, find it good business to flatter their patrons: besides many of them probably share their cruder patrons' tastes.

The result is that cheapening of values, that blind admiration of wealth and notoriety however gained, that obsession with material things ranging from cars and juke-boxes to frigidaires and cosmetics, on which the inhabitants of the screen world build a precarious happiness. In the Century of the Common Man a Henry Ford is more admired than Newton; any composer of jazz or swing, if he made a million out of it, is a greater genius than a Mozart who died in poverty. "FOREVER AMBER" having sold a million copies, must be a much better book than "LA COUSINE BETTE"; practically anyone who chatters of functionalism and uses steel, concrete and glass is a finer architect than a Palladio whose columns serve no purpose but to look beautiful.

I could analyse films, give details; but what's the use? The reader must know them as well as I do. Technically and dramatically, the screen has done many brilliant things. Culturally, despite the occasional masterpiece or near-masterpiece, it has left a smear across the landscape of our age like that of some gigantic slug.

Campbell Dixon

THE POPE SPEAKS THROUGH TELEVISION

We have asked Jean-Pierre C h a r t i e r, Director of the film, "THE POPE AND THE BIRTH OF TELEVISION" to write for us about his impressions when filming the scenes in the Vatican and to tell us the purpose he has in view in making the film.

Following an official request to the Vatican, His Holiness Pius XII consented to deliver a message destined for viewers of French television. As there is still no transmitting station at the Vatican this message and the short commentary which precedes it were recorded to be retransmitted on Easter Sunday over the Eiffel Tower aerial. Father P i c h a r d, who is in charge of religious programmes for French radio and television, organised this feature which marks an important date in the history of French television and also in the life of the Church, since it is the first time that a Pope has been able to achieve direct contact with the faithful by entering the intimacy of their homes. M. C r a v e r i, one of the foremost Italian cameramen, agreed to place his great skill at the service of this enterprise.

It was a strange sight to see one of the large audience chambers of the Vatican transformed for several hours into a studio, the rails of a mobile camera laid on the carpet facing the papal throne and projectors crowding the room. Accompanied only by Count G a l e a z z i, head of the Vatican Internal Affairs, Pius XII on entering did not seem in the least astonished by the unusual appearance of an audience during which ten or so technicians and workmen in working clothes where bustling round as though on a set. Speaking French with the greatest ease, although with a slight accent, His Holiness showed great interest in the transmission and asked numerous questions about it. In the course of the conversation which he had with the technicians everyone was struck by the Holy Father's simplicity and by the expression of extreme goodness and great intelligence which emanates from his face and conversation. The message which he delivered before the camera stresses the importance which the Holy Father attaches to television. He emphasized that this first message marks a date in the history of the Church, fifteen years after the first message broadcast by Pius XI. No-one connected professionally with the cinema can remain unmoved by the Holy Father's interest in the new technical medium from which he expects, in his own words, "consequences of the highest importance as a result of the ever more striking revelation of truth to loyal minds."

It would be regrettable if these contemporary words of the Holy Father were to be reserved to viewers of television only. This message, therefore, will be reproduced in the film "THE POPE AND THE BIRTH OF TELEVISION", which will include shots of the Pope talking informally to the technicians after the recording of the message. The film will recall briefly the beginnings of religious transmissions by French television. Midnight Mass at Notre Dame, the first Mass to be televised, the presentation of television to the Cardinals and Archbishops of France, the ordination ceremony which took place in the Carmelite Chapel on Holy Saturday will serve to introduce a short visit to the Vatican and the words of the Pope.

This film will show to all the new possibilities which television offers to those who wish to share in the life of the Church. Soon the world will be able to contemplate time itself in which the manifestations of Catholic life will be unfolded. But in order that the world may see, in the words of Pius XII, "the crowds flocking from all sides of the huge square of St. Peter's to receive the Pope's blessing and hear his words", it will be necessary to equip the Vatican with a transmitter. The Cardinals and Archbishops of France have undertaken to offer this transmitter to the Holy Father on the occasion of the Holy Year. In this film French Catholics will be able to see Father Pichard giving this news to His Holiness. They can be proud to think that it is to them that the Holy Father has addressed his first televised message, and that it is thanks to them that he will henceforward be able to say to all Catholics, "May our glance and yours meet for the first time in an exchange of paternal and filial affection."

Jean-Pierre Chartier

Father PICHARD, O.P.
Ecclesiastical Counsellor of the French Broadcasting and Television

THE CHURCH AND TELEVISION

THE FIRST RELIGIOUS TRANSMISSIONS IN FRANCE

On the 25th December 1948, Mass celebrated by Cardinal Suhard in the Cathedral of Notre Dame, Paris, was televised for the first time.

On Holy Saturday, 1949, the French Television Service transmitted an Ordination of Priests in the old Carmelite Church in Paris. On Easter Sunday, in the place where B r a n l y made his wireless discoveries, the first Mass of a young Priest followed by the Easter Message of the Holy Father, was sent out to television viewers.

These three transmissions, each lasting about an hour and a half, went through without any technical hitch, and were received at more than two hundred kilometres away Eiffel Tower. These religious transmissions brought home to millions the fact that television had left the laboratory, and had become an everyday reality.

From now on, a member of a religious order will watch over television, as he has done already for the French Radio, with the task of reviewing, suggesting, controlling and putting into production the Catholic Transmissions called for by the public and paid for by the Government service.

In a country where the financing of Church schools by the State has always been refused, this freedom gained for television, which, as a combination of cinema and radio, will influence throughout the day the minds of adults and children alike, marks a considerable progress.

A few weeks after Easter, the French radio technicians who were responsible for these first religious transmissions gave the Holy Father in Rome his first long distance viewing. The Pope himself was present, and put into action on the evening of Ascension Day, the first link between the Vatican and Castel Gandolfo.

Catholics who were frightened of the cinema, and have taken little part in Radio, are well on the way to getting a privileged place in television.

It is significant that a film has just been issued entitled "THE POPE AND THE BIRTH OF TELEVISION." Long before the general public of Europe has any idea of television, the Church is playing a big part in the development of this new branch of science. Her action can now begin to extend.

The Telecineclubs.

Television sets are dear, and in countries devasted by war where purchasing power is small, it seems a good idea that viewers should group together to draw the benefits from television. Our Catholic action groupe could be among the first buyers of television sets with the purpose of starting viewers' clubs. These clubs, in association with one another, would be able to have considerable influence upon the constitution of the programmes at the time when these begin to extend and come to cover the whole day. The true liberty which we want to find in the use of this new means of expression cannot exist in a monopoly whether this be by the state or by a private individual. It demands a state of affairs in which those who use it will have a true care for the real education of the masses.

The cinema and television have a tendency to make the viewer merely a passive spectator. Telecineclubs by giving rise to discussion and commentary by the viewers cause them to use their brains as well as their eyes.

Television is bringing into existence conditions very similar to those in which the Church was begun. The rich Roman ladies lent their houses for the celebration of the Divine Mysteries, at which assisted rich and poor alike, their houses have now become the famous basilicas of Rome. In much the same way, the fortunate owner of a television set can invite his friends and neighbours to share it with him, as indeed many did last Christmas and Easter to follow the Mass at Notre Dame and listen to the message of the Holy Father. The early Christians pooled their resources to help one another; parishes could buy a parish set. Both in town and country, television can help to reestablish that life in common which is the necessary base of the Christian life. In the past Christians came together for a meal, to-day they can join together for their recreation and education. We shall see the quickest development of television in the towns and here it can help to restore the sense of community that many city parishes have lost. It might seem that television is a luxury, but if we make the effort, it will be at the disposal of the people.

Telecineclubs and cineclubs.

The cultural importance for the future of telecineclubs and cineclubs cannot be overestimated. There is, however, a real difference between them. They are not just alternative aspects of the same thing. There is a difference of scale; the cineclub is on the family scale.

There is nothing comparable to cineclubs in the cultural history of mankind. The literary salons of the eighteenth century were cliques of the privileged class, so too the ancient Forum and Agora were the preserve of one particular class. In the case of sermons we have a monologue, no discussion. In schools, even in secondary schools the instruction is given to intelligences that are undeveloped, immature. Cineclubs are made up of adults who discuss their experiences, who are students of life. In them alone we find all social classes together. Conversations begun at the film go on all through the week at home and at work, over meals and during visits. We might in truth say that cineclubs are the people's universities of the future. The others have failed because they use abstract means for their

instruction. It is supremely necessary to form film producers, well-versed in their technique, who will bring Christianity into these new surroundings.

Telecineclubs, on the other hand, are on a smaller scale. They are for the family or the neighbourhood, especially in cities where the crowding together of men seems to isolate them all the more. At one time common work was a social link. But nowadays everybody gets out of his workshop as quickly as he can; he leaves the factory, shop or office and goes home to his friends and neighbours. A few years hence we can picture the television set as a meeting place, especially in blocks of flats (architects ought to plan for this). We can imagine Mrs. Smith on the first floor going to nurse sick Mrs. Robinson on the top floor because she had met her in the television room and talked about the films with her.

The Cinema and Television.

Catholics who are better organised than anybody for the forming of groups of tele-viewers are in a good position to become the first clients of group television. They will be able to make suggestions about programmes and influence them. In the early and therefore expensive stage of television, Catholics can offer subjects for transmission which are richly varied and at the same time would cost little. We have only to think of the masterpieces of art, the cathedrals, the paintings and sculpture, the liturgy with all its rich variety of vestments. All that is needed is the electricity for the projection. There is no scenery required, nor script to be written, no watchers to pay. It is reckoned that the transmission of the Mass is the most-listened to programme of the French Radio. When the Mass is televised regularly there will be a general movement of the faithful towards these complete services and the clientele of television will be thereby increased.

At the moment there is an atmosphere of mistrust between the cinema and television, and young artists should use their talents to establish the true criteria for a new art which would be well-adapted for televised scenes.

The cinema is afraid of television and is looking round for means for defence, it would be better for the cinema to realise that it will have to work hand in hand with television. Leading executives are trying to exclude television from the film world, when the opposite would be the right course.

In the course of time, when television has atteined its full development, the films it will use will be short. With a small receiver it is hard to sustain the attention for a long time, the husband is wanted on the phone, the wife has something to do in the kitchen, somebody comes or a conversation starts, and the thread of the story is lost. Or it may be that I want to be in bed by ten and a film which is going to last an hour and a half begins at half-past-nine, I must go to bed late or ruin the evening, and whichever way I decide I am not too pleased. In America they have realised this, and now they use films lasting five or ten minutes or perhaps a quarter of an hour. The mind might wander during one film but comes back in the next, whereas very rarely will anyone settle in an armchair for an hour and a half.

All this is going to create a fresh opportunity for enterprising young people. At present a big film costs millions and only experienced producers are entrusted with all that amount of money.

A knowledge of the plays of Racine or Corneille was spread all over by printing a few thousands of copies. Nowadays it calls for an expenditure of millions to give expression to the work of some unknown. The use of shorts by television will give new and young producers their chance to get into the cinema world, the big demand for short films will create work for many. Besides it will help to establish a democratic freedom that has been missing; only the select few have, up till now, been able to impose their idea of life upon millions. The use by Television of shorts will bring back liberty to the screen and an increasing number of people will be able to give their experiences and idea of life.

The cinema will be serving its own best interests, if it lends its best films to Television during this initial period. For the present, during this time of "getting organised", the long film is the easiest solution both from the point of view of finance and from the point of view of art, because only little by little will the staff be found who will be able to bring into being the abundance of new works. As time goes on and Television becomes more common, the demand for short films will increase. Long films go out and people will go to the being cinemas to see them, taking the chance to escape for a while from the importunities of their friends and relatives, and from the ring of the telephone.

At present only 15% of the French people are cinema-goers. Through Television, which is itself on the family scale, the thinking public will be drawn to the big cinemas, if the producers (who claim to serve "the man in the street") will realise that most of their films do not interest three quarters of the French people. With this policy the cinema will save itself.

The Construction of a European network of Television and its effects on the life of the Church.

Before a start can be made with the construction of a Television network for Europe. agreement must be reached about what is called "definition". This is a most important question, more important, in fact, than the question of railway gauge in the last century, because the cinema and radio, the two greatest means of influencing peoples, will be absorbed into television.

What is meant by "definition?" In printing, the details of a picture depend upon the number of dots, the more dots, the more details. Television uses lines instead of dots and the more lines, the better the image: the number of lines is termed the "definition" of the image. Ordinary wireless sets can receive various stations on the different wavelengths but television sets are made for one particular definition and can only receive transmissions of this definition. If a transmitter changes its definition, then all the sets of its viewers are out of date and they must get new ones. When we remember the price of a television set, we see at once that a transmitter once committed to any particular system is tied to that system for a considerable length of time.

When the regular transmissions were begun in the United States in 1943, the best definition then available was of 525 lines and this was adopted. In France progress was naturally slow after the troubles of war but this gave extra time to the research-workers and they found that they could use of definition of 819 lines, this has been officially adopted by a government decree of 20th November, 1948. This definition gives several advantages, the image is really first-class and of equal quality as the image on the cinema screen. With modern technical devices a televised incident can be copied on to film and be projected on the screen

within ninety seconds of its reception. When the public becomes used to this televised reporting it will not be satisfied with an image that is inferior to that of the cinema to which they are accustomed. A third advantage of this definition is that television in colour is possible with it.

Having taken all these points into consideration, the French Government has decided to act upon the advice of the engineers and adopt this definition. At the moment the television network is in construction and the various decisions made by the countries of Europe are going to have very great effects on the life of the Catholic Church, because at present there is no means of linking up with a network of different definition. A television transmission has a range which is usually limited by the horizon and so it is necessary to have relay stations to pass it on to other districts. The construction of these relay stations is now going ahead in France.

There is at present in Western Europe a great desire for unity both of mind and spirit necessary for the Catholic Church. For this reason the split-up into different nations (as at the Reformation) is unthinkable. It might be that transmitters of another standard are less costly to erect but this immediate financial advantage would quickly be wiped out by the necessity of having to provide the whole of the programmes. The poverty of the Western nations brought about by the war will demand that they co-operate and share programmes. In time both costs and quality of transmissions will be improved, and unity of ideas strengthened by a technical unity will be in a position to resist the attacks of materialism. Catholics of all nations cannot tolerate that the great spiritual values should be sacrificed to commercial interests.

Liturgy and Television. The age of reading, the middle-age of the mind?

After the Christmas transmission of the Mass, some people said that the Church was on the wane and was seeking new means of propaganda to bolster up her failing strength. The agreement between the Church and television goes further than these people imagine. Television producers are re-discovering the ways God used first of all to reveal Himself to us, and which our use of books has hidden. The goal of life on earth is to know God and the eternal life which begins here below. But God is invisible. How then can He be made known? The ideal is: "Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect". How can we imitate a Person nobody has seen? Almighty God reveals Himself to us in three ways: by the written word, by the spoken word and finally by the acted work. The spoken word is better than the written word. We can tell the difference between a preacher who believes what he is saying and one who does not believe. The acted word is much richer than the spoken word. If the opposite were true we would be content to read the great dramas without troubling to go to the theatre. "God", says St. Paul, "who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by prophets, last of all in these days has spoken to us by His Son". (Heb. i. 1.). On Christmas night "the Word of God is made flesh." The fact that the first Mass to be televised was the Mass of the Nativity was a striking coincidence. Our Lord has put on human flesh as an actor puts on the costume of the character he is taking, and Our Lord has translated into human actions the holiness of the hidden God. "He who sees me, sees the Father," says Our Lord to St. Philip. By imitating Christ we reproduce the life of God in ourselves.

Our Lord ascended into Heaven after His thirty-three years on this earth and He has left it to the Liturgy to continue His own method of instruction. At the altar the priest renews the gestures of Our Lord at the Last Supper, bringing to the Table of the Lord men of all ages and all climes. Christmas night 1948 marks a step in the growth of the Mystical Body of Christ. The renewal by the priest of Christ's action at the Last Supper came from the Church and entered for the first time into private houses. Well might Cardinal Suhard exclaim: "This brilliant invention is now going to play its part in the work of the world's salvation".

The International language of Television.

Printing helped to weaken the liturgical life of the Church. It is, perhaps more than coincidence that the liturgical revival is taking place in the cinema age. The cinema gives us a rich presentation, the book a poorer one, better still the cinema, and television bring us into contact with the object or person presented.

When the bishop calls a candidate to the subdiaconate, the latter makes his response without speaking a word merely by taking a step forward, leaving the world forever behind him. Everybody can understand the language of signs, but when the Vatican Radio transmits a Pontifical ceremony they need six commentators to send it out to the world. For the Holy Year the Catholics of France are going to present the Pope with a television station, and now the faithful will be able to understand the liturgical gestures of the Holy Father, because they will be able to see what he is doing. The language problem, which causes a great deal of difficulty to the Church, will have disappeared, for the Liturgy is an international language.

A few years hence, when the coloured subdeacon "takes the step" in Brazzaville Cathedral, all his brethren, of every tribe, dialect and nation, will be able to understand his reply much better than if he had opened his mouth, and they will be able to unite by prayer in his sacrifice.

Before the end of this century. Christians will sanctify the Sunday in two complementary ways. In the morning they will go with their friends to Mass at the parish church, and afterwards they will share in the wonderful liturgy of the universal Church, either in Rome or in some other country. The liturgy cannot be compared with Esperanto as a way of uniting peoples.

A Television Transmitter at the Vatican.

The Holy Year of 1950 opens in the middle of a century which has seen the development of so many new means of communication. Millions of pilgrims will come from the ends of the earth to pray with the Pope at the tomb of St. Peter. On this occasion, Mgr. Valerio V a l e r i, President of the Committee of the Holy Year, has asked that the offerings of the faithful should be devoted to the development of Radio Vatican. At a moment when the whole world is united, it is necessary that the voice of the Church should make itself heard over the whole face of the earth.

The French Hierarchy has decided that France will offer a television transmitter to the Vatican. Before the end of the century all Catholics will be able to see the Pope's Mass in Rome, and will be able to pray with him, on condition that all European countries adopt the same system of transmission. The French Government has already decided on its system, and the work has begun. If the West wishes to follow the Mass of the Pope one day, Italy would

be well advised to adopt the same system as France. Unless the Vatican programme could be relayed via Corsica.

The analogy with the question of railway gauge continues. Televised broadcasts cannot be widespread without connected relays. If Italy, which so far has not taken part in television nor even taken any decision were to adopt a different system, it would be impossible to relay from one network to another. With this offer of a transmitter of the French system to the Vatican, Catholics light the first beacon to indicate to every country as well as Italy the way to true spiritual and cultural unity, which Western Europe will need so much in future years.

Pierre BOYER
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The French Amateur

CINE WORLD

Many people, it seems to me, are not at all clear about the meaning of the term "amateur cinema".

This may be the result of ignorance about its vital achievements or the result of looking upon it simply as a pleasant hobby — something like amateur photography with all that this connotes in the way of pretentiousness, insignificance, and lack of culture.

But whatever the case, since the *International Film Review* is kind enough to offer me an excellent platform by throwing open its column to me, what else can I do but take adantage of this opportunity to restore amateur cinematography to its rightful place? To describe, for the benefit of those who to their misfortune, neither know of it nor practise it, its widespread radius of action which increases year by year, its organisation, and the ends it proposes to attain?

I will not try to write a history of this subject, well known as this is in other respects, but may I be allowed to stress one small point, apparently trifling, but for me possessing singular importance.

The brilliant and late-lamented Louis L u m i è r e, having, with his brother Auguste, constructed the first ciné-camera, went off into his garden at Lyon, close to his workshops, and set about "shooting" his first film. This was the antiquated and charming "GOUTER DE BÉBÉ" (Feeding Baby), the baby in question being none other than Louis' own daughter!

Amateur cinematography, therefore, in the sense in which it is normally understood, indubitably began at the same time as the cinema in general. And one can say, without fear of contradiction, that the professional cinema was born of the amateur cinema — which is equivalent to saying that the amateur cinema has the right to be respected from the start, on the grounds of age.

But since then the roads have diverged. Exclusive attention was given to the entertainment-cinema, which became commercialised in no time, and thoroughly so, as is well known.

One fine day, however, Charles P a t h é, a Frenchman, conceived the idea of putting the cinema back on its original road, and created the first truly amateur ciné-camera.

I believe I am right in saying that at the time when he designed these machines for this specialised public, there was a general outcry against his ideas — ideas which were nevertheless prophetic. Yet Pathé persevered. A company was formed, and the amateur cinema had been born again, this time officially.

And that is the historical fact which I wish to stress; the amateur cinema was born in France, whence it has invaded the world.

To give an idea of its present importance, it might be helpful to point out that in France alone at the outbreak of war in 1939 there were more than 350,000 ciné-cameras in the hands of amateurs. If we wanted to play around with statistics, this enormous figure would enable us to say, for example, that the amount of film used in cameras, as well as in projectors, exceeded by a good margin the footage expended by the professional cinema; I am speaking of course of France before the war. To-day, inevitably, it is impossible to publish figures; they would be very probably incorrect, for they would be difficult to arrive at in view of the extreme complexity of the organisations, firms and distributing companies who work with the three miniature sizes of films beloved of the amateur. These are, may I remind my readers, the 9.5 mm, the 8 mm, and the 16 mm.

As a pastime, a pleasant and modern form of amusement offering all the attractions of novelty, amateur cinematography possesses nowadays quite remarkable potentialities. All our gratitude and praise are due to those pioneers in France who, realising these artistic and technical potentialities, blazed the trail for us. One point soon became plain — the amateur cinema, once brought within the range of individuals, was bound to thrive and prosper, but would achieve worthwhile progress only in so far as it was fostered and practised collectively. Groups were formed and Clubs were born, hesitant at first, but in time growing stronger. Rapid progress followed; the course was being set, the impulse provided, and today in France, (with which I deal by itself for the

moment) the result is seen in the establishment of more than one hundred societies functioning regularly from one end of France to the other.

It is from the organisation of these that the strength of the French amateur cinema initially comes — an organisation of spontaneous growth, modelled on a tentative framework that when tested in practice proved an unqualified success. Each society gathers into itself all the cinema camera owners in the district, welds them together, gives them a common aim and so gradually builds up the general structure of the French amateur cinema, based on the *Fédération Française des Clubs de Cinéma d'Amateur.* (F. F. C. C. A.) whose headquarters are at Paris, 128 Boulevard Malesherbes, and whose president is M. André Avalle, a man of boundless enthusiasm for this cause. The societies affiliated to the F.F.C.C.A. are grouped in regions, and each region possesses a leader who co-ordinates all the activities relevant to the Federation. The most important of these activities, I must point out, is the organising each year of the big national competition for the best amateur film.

Note that these societies are constituted as free organisations under the law of 1901, eschewing the profit motive and aiming principally at the aesthetic and technical development both collectively and individually of the hobby to which they are dedicated.

Abroad, in Europe especially, similar movements have seen the light of day. Their present importance depends on their relative enthusiasm. Spain, Italy, Norway, Luxembourg, Denmark, England, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Germany and many other countries constitute the present *Union Internationale du Cinéma d'Amateur* (UNICA) whose president is M. Avalle, already mentioned.

UNICA organises each year in a different country the *Congrès International,* and the *Concours International.* This Davis Cup of the amateur cinema world has been offered every year — war years excepted — since 1934, when the union was founded on the initiative of a few pioneers. France has, from the beginning, consistently shone in this sphere, carrying off several years in succession the most sought-after prizes or the first place in the classification by nations.

The position that France has won is due in far greater measure to her understanding of the spirit of amateur cinematography than to purely technical successes. We must define this spirit.

There is no doubt that the snapshot-album way of practising cinematography has an absorbing interest. It is charged with great emotion, having as it does the power to create the illusion of life, and to enable us to follow, in a progression too soon completed, the birth, life and disappearance of our children and dear ones. In this, it must be admitted, lies its principal attraction for individuals.

But is that the only attraction? By no means. Thanks to the ciné-camera, a medium of self-expression of unprecedented power has been put into man's hands. With the ciné-camera, every man can in accordance with his temperament reveal to us something of his personal philosophy, his reactions to Life in the world and in society; he can take us inside his work and his activities; he can express in his own way, untrammelled by censorship or by commercial considerations, what he thinks, what he loves, and what he desires. For the language of the cinema is universal. On the plane of pure cinematic art, researches and experiments are open to him; he can strike out on new lines of technique, form and thought. What a magnificent testing ground. And what a magnificent introduction to the understanding of the cinema!

These are the ends to which all our efforts are directed, not without difficulty, I dare say, but also with a great deal of enjoyment. Working in conjunction to these ends are the Clubs, the Federation and the review *"Ciné-Amateur"* which I have had the honour of directing since 1930, and which is more or less the mouthpiece of this magnificent movement. All our work and activities go to prove that the amateur cinema possesses a happy hunting ground still unexplored.

Gradually, meanwhile, characters are asserting themselves and roles becoming clear. Technicians, directors of great renown, emerge each year from the unnumbered ranks of the amateurs. They reveal themselves still as they used to be, their style unadorned and sincere, and possessing that simplicity which remains the basis of true art.

In the international sphere also, the amateur cinema is playing a very important part. There is no better way of bringing home ideas and tendencies than this same roll of film, the reflection and image of our dreams, aspirations, culture and ideals.

By seeing people live and suffer, affected by emotion and love, one gets to know them better and more quickly, one understands them better, and one perceives in a truth stripped of all artifice, Mr. Smith of London, Señor Gomez of Madrid, Herr Gustavson of Stockholm, M. Martin of Geneva, and M. Dupont of Paris, exactly as they are, that is to say, brothers of the same family, the human family.

I feel that when an activity like that, the practice of amateur cinematography and its natural developments, attains heights like these, then it ennobles those who take part in it, and assures itself of survival.

Could not the amateur cinema also play its part — modest enough perhaps on its own level but not without importance to me — in the immense Catholic world where ideas, tendencies, and races already mingle under the widespread vigilant protection of the Church?

There are throughout the world thousands of travellers, priests and missionaries who are often amateur cinematographers. Perhaps without knowing it they already belong to our great family, a family which asks only to increase in order to live a better and fuller life.

Let them approach each other; let them get to know one another. We are ready to welcome them and help them.

Pierre Boyer

At the Vatican, the Holy Father who shows a lively interest in the progress of Television and the Cinema, has provided himself with the latest television sets, made in France. — At Ouessant (L'Isle de l'Epouvante) a young curate works with a team of amateur cinematographers.

Yesterday, men of the character of Charles de Foucauld, carried to the Africans the message of Christian civilisation...

(Robert Darène in Léon Poirier's film LA ROUTE INCONNUE "The Unknown Way")

What message does the cinema bring them today?...

(The Algerian Government's Cameo-Cinema No 1 arrives at Canrobert, Department of Constantine)

Edward CARRICK
Art. Director, Pinewood Films Ltd. Author

GREAT BRITAIN

GEORGE PEARSON

PIONEER AND PROPHET

I came into films 23 years ago as a Designer with an ardent desire to learn more about this fantastic new medium of expression called the Film. I look back to-day over 23 years of endeavour and all I can see is the growth of a new industry for producing cheap entertainment for tired people and pernicious propaganda for the uneducated. I have seen silent films almost develop into a new art and the arrival of a new technical device called "the talkies" put back that development by some twenty years.

Now why is it that some of us, who consider ourselves serious-minded artists, carry on in what seems a hopeless battle against commercialism? I think it is because we know that the essential quality of any medium that expresses modern life — though — aspirations must be *movement* and the answer is kinematics; but how to study this new form? Not by reading about it and talking about it. There is only one way, by practising it... and there is the snag, you can only practice under commercial patronage. So into the studios go many good men whose identity is soon lost in the confusion caused by a lot of showmen trying frantically to make a lot of money in a short time by exploiting the gullibility of human nature.

In this vast confusion — this Babel — I can hear one voice that has been persistant and true, over the last 30 years, the voice of George Pearson. That voice is still as clear as in 1923 when he spoke these words to the Nottingham Playgoers Club:

"I believe in the Cinema; in its claim to be an Art, in its power to speak to the people with equal vigour to that claimed by the stage, and in its ability to stand first in the days to come as Inspirer of the people.

"But I equally deplore all those hideous bonds that now strangle its growth — the many passengers and parasites who feed upon it, the charlatans who exploit it, and above all the thinkers who will not think about it; the convention ridden workers who would leave to others all discovery, content to get a living of sorts by toiling in narrow grooves till the end.

"If you are to help me, you must be with me in my belief. It is a fervent and consuming belief."

I have a copy of the rest of his talk which I read and read again. It is this man's unerring clearsightedness that has made it possible for a few more of us in England to just discern the way ahead and thus to carry on. It was Pearson who first taught me that the film had a grammar all its own and should not be dependent on the grammar of the other arts in order to express itself, and until we had learned that grammar we could never hope to make scripts that were film — but would continue to make novels and plays in film form.

In 1922 Pearson wrote:

"That much abused word 'art' is popularly supposed to refer to some rarefied form of pleasure only to be enjoyed by highly cultured souls. It is something far greater, for by art alone is imagination nurtured, the soul freed, and the whole life invigorated...

... It usually gives the most intense pleasure but if that were its sole aim it would defeat its purpose. Pleasure is not an object to aim at, it is a result of aiming at something far greater... the giving of pleasure is subsidiary to the desire for Truth in the message...

... The foundation of the art of the cinema is the scenario. Till the scenario is such a work of artistic labour that a hundred years hence... five hundred years hence... some happy producer of those distant days may take it and remake the film for his own age, till then there will be no art of the screen. When the artist scenarist knows his scenario in all its rich fullness will live if it be worthy... will be remade in the years to come, as Gay's Opera to-day, then there will arise an art.

...the artist derives his happiness from achievement. If you tell him his work is as transient as a dragon fly's existence, there is an end to his desire to achieve, and there is no art. I repeat, art will come when the scenario is a work of art that shall live as Shakespeare's works live.

... Are any of these things possible to-day? I do not know. There are some who hope and pray, but life is short, art is long, and I conclude as one who has been caught in the machine, with a fervent appeal to the young men outside its whirling arms.."

More recently he reminded me again in a letter that:

"The secret of every fine film is enshrined in the script . . . which should never go to the floor till every second of time entailed in its screening has been proved necessary and rightfully used.

. . . Only a mind acutely conscious of Cinema can pet a script to this degree . . . one like H i t c h c o c k has. In the Commercial Entertainment Film there is only one justification for the use of screen time . . . emotional content. Every scene . . . every shot . . . must hold this vital Emotional Content . . . and this does not mean Hysteria, but it does mean feeling."

But where is this man of the Cinema, this man to whom we could all go to learn more? Hidden away doing pioneer work for the Colonial Office, making films for the African Natives — the only man who could take such a job seriously and wholeheartedly. But I sometimes feel ashamed to think that the Film Industry which he helped to build has nothing for him to do.

The other day it was very interesting to read an article referring to Lenin's appreciation of the film as *"an instrument placed in his grasp by modern science"*, followed by the suggestion that the church should not lag behind in its appreciation of the power of this instrument. Lenin, in fact, said of the Cinema *"for us it is the most important of the arts"*. But it was not what Lenin s a i d but w h a t h e d i d that is so important. He established the first great school for the study of the film as an art in which he could train the makers of the films of the future, and thus know how to handle this "instrument". This long term policy of a school to breed men to make films to breed ideas I have talked of for many years but it has always been looked on as unpractical by those who have wanted quick returns, whereas those who have sought to establish Christianity have never expected quick returns because life has never seemed so short to them.

With support we could establish the finest school in the world tomorrow — while George P e a r s o n is still alive — or must we wait till it is too late and then regret that we did not learn more from the only man that knew.

Are the makers of films to-day so self-satisfied that they cannot see that a new medium cannot be trifled with before audiences of millions? Surely they must realise that they have in their charge a sacred trust and that upon their representation of ideas depends the education and appreciation of whole generations.

Edward Carrick

Grace CONWAY
Catholic Herald Film Critic, London

SCOTT OF THE ANTARCTIC

"Man's reach should exceed his grasp — Else what's heaven for ?"

Few stories of British enterprise and endeavour — and certainly none in modern times — have stirred the heart or the imagination as has the story of Captain Scott's expedition to the Antarctic. It is a story on the heroic scale. It shook the world with pity when, after those agonising months of waiting, the bodies of the survivors were found in the snow-covered hut which had been so tragically close to deliverance and in which the uncompromising and relentless blizzard had condemned these men to die. Because of the diary that Scott kept, even while his fingers froze and his eyes dimmed with the haze of hunger, the story of this expedition remains vivid and authentic. Without any heroics or melodramatic language, it has come to us in the terse, factual record of that most economic of word-users — the English public school man — and it therefore speaks volumes for the content of that diary that its very economy of words went to the nation's heart like a knife.

Who, indeed, can read Scott's last cry — the only emotional sentence in the whole diary — when he knew the end was at hand? «For God's sake, look after our dear ones!» Captain Oates had gone out to die in the blizzard. Dr. Wilson, the scientist of the expedition, died soon after. For a little while Scott was left alone — and then death mercifully claimed him too. So ended one of the bravest attacks ever made on the ice fortress of the Antarctic. Everything seemed to conspire against Scott — and the final blow came when, on reaching the South Pole, he found the Norwegian explorer Amundsen had already got there before him. It was a bitter disappointment that must have made the weary treck back to the

hut doubly hard — the hut that was to be his tomb.

Lots of material here for a film. Yes. And lots of temptation to dramatise it, make it into a sob story, pile on the agony, jerk tears from sympathetic audiences. But, by great good fortune, the studio that decided to make the film was the small, unpretentious and independent company in the London suburb of Ealing. They had had many artistic successes in the past but this was to be something on a scale never attempted before. It was, besides, something which must be done with utmost sensitiveness and tact for the principal characters had many relatives living. Their feelings must not be outraged, nor must the characters be in the slightest degree misrepresented. These conditions, as it turned out, were faithfully fulfilled and «SCOTT OF THE ANTARCTIC» has brought honours to its producer, Sir Michael Balcon, its director, Mr. Charles Frend, its chief cameraman, Osmond Bonadaile, and, of course, its chief actors headed by John Mills who plays the part of Scott.

Anyone who has studied the history of Polar exploration must have been struck by the lure these icy wastes have for men once they have experienced them. The opening shots of the film with the camera travelling over the limitless icefields where no living thing can exist, at once establish this strange magnetism that both Scott and Shackleton felt and could not resist. It is a sort of Dante's hell, made even more credible by the keening of thin, reedy human voices. (England's most famous contemporary composer, Vaughan Williams, wrote the music.) These seem indeed to be the lamentations of lost souls condemned to the frozen waste lands for the life of luxury on earth. Vaughan Williams' score fits the whole mood of the film like a glove.

Two colour processes were used — Technicolor «monopack» for the outdoor locations and Technicolor process for the studio. The «monopack» has been extraordinarily successful in presenting the cold pastel greens, blues and off-white of ice and snow. Not only on actual South Polar locations, but on the Aletsch Glacier in Switzerland and the Hardanger Jokul, 6000 feet above sea level in Norway, this colour method was used. At times, so hazardous were conditions in these territories, that actors and technicians alike were enduring the most appalling hardships — emulating in a measure the tortures of a genuine Polar expedition. Frostbite and falling down crevasses were only some of the hazards of the game.

As the film develops and the conditions for Scott's team deteriorate, eyes become red-rimmed and skin begins to crack. But these are not studio make-up, they are the real thing. The stubbly beards are real, too, and the wincing, as the razor-like wind cuts the face. It is this insistence on reproduction of conditions of the actual Polar conditions that lends such an air of veracity to this gallant picture.

The least successful part of «SCOTT OF THE ANTARCTIC» is the rather tedious preparation Scott himself had to make to get money for his expedition. But for him it actually was tedious. We see him wandering from one government department to another trying to get a grant — and getting nothing but a rather tepid blessing. We see him lecturing to dull groups of «stuffed shirts» trying to whip up subscriptions. We see him, too, in his domestic home life — and Dr. Wilson, also — and these brief sequences are just the least bit stilted and artificial. But once the expedition gets on its way, then the pace never slackens. There is not a single concession to popular appeal; yet every inch of the going is tense and real. The only person who has been allowed to be dramatic is the cameraman — and the actors he has shot have been icy reef, glacier, unexpected pools of blue water. Comedy, too, has a brief moment when the penguins take the stage — the last living things the expedition meets.

John Mills, who is said to be very like Scott, [redacted] careful almost to a fault to show him as the typical Englishman who would rather die than display emotion. It is because of this that «SCOTT OF THE ANTARCTIC», while being a magnificent reconstruction of the expedition, does not quite capture the inner soul of the man that shines through Scott's own written record.

But this, perhaps, is also in character. The British are often able to convey in writing what they would not dream of putting into words. So I think we may accept John Mills' Scott as authentic and the whole picture as a tribute to a group of enterprising and brave men whose behaviour in endurance and in accepting frustration and misfortune will be a lasting inspiration for generations to come.

Grace Conway

Ivo JAROSY

FOREIGN FILMS IN ENGLAND

AN INTERVIEW BY MISTER G. M. HOELLERING

Director of London's Academy Cinema

Mr. G. M. Hoellering, whom I went to interview about the position in England with regard to foreign films, is a director of the Academy Cinema, one of London's oldest and best-known «specialised cinemas». In answer to my first question, Hoellering defined a specialised cinema as one which selected its films, regardless of their language or country of origin, solely on the basis of artistic merit. He emphasised, however, that the question of foreign films and specialised cinemas could not be satisfactorily discussed without taking into account the wider problems confronting the entire film industry at the present time. He went on to outline to me briefly how the present situation has arisen.

The art of film had been born on the fairground, providing a popular entertainment of the most primitive kind. After they had satisfied their initial curiosity, millions of more educated or sensitive spectators stayed away from the cinema, as they did not regard it as worthwhile entertainment and preferred to use their leisure hours for visits to the serious theatre, the opera, or concerts.

As the film grew up and moved further away from its place of birth, a better type of public began to frequent the cinemas. But apart from technical advances (in the building and equipping of cinemas, for instance) the system of distributing and exhibiting films underwent no fundamental change. Still no distinction was made between vulgar and serious entertainment, and the aim of most companies was the mass-production of films with the greatest possible «box office appeal» — i. e. of films which appealed to the lowest common denominator of public taste, and dealt mostly with sex and crime. In this way, a vast cinema audience was built up, but the educated public was still hardly touched.

With the arrival of the sound-film, producers were forced to call in greater numbers of artists of a more serious type (such as theatrical actors, playwrights, etc.). In many countries small groups of these artists succeeded in fighting their way to the front, in spite of all the difficulties placed in their path by their commercial bosses, and began to produce films of genuine artistic merit. These films, however, found it difficult to obtain a wide showing: if they came from the Continent, the fact that they were in a foreign language was against them, and even if they were English and American, commercial distributors and exhibitors were reluctant to handle films which, they thought, were above the heads of their audiences. The London specialised cinemas, which were created to give such films a public showing, had largely to win their audiences from that section of the public which had never been regular cinema-goers at all. Their pioneer efforts for the first time attracted the educated sections of the public to the cinema, and helped to establish the film as a serious form of art in the mind of the most cultured section of the community.

In the provinces the opportunities for seeing good films were still fewer except in one particular cinema in Glasgow, the Cosmo Cinema, ably managed by Mr. George Singleton. The demand for such films, however, increased continually and led to the foundation of film societies in towns and villages all over the country which made it their voluntary duty to show to their members important English-speaking and foreign films, which the ordinary cinemas of their district would not exhibit. About two hundred and eighty such film societies exist today in England.

There is no doubt that the pioneering activities of the specialised cinemas and the film societies were crowned by a considerable measure of success in their efforts to create an audience for high-quality films. But there are still not enough specialised cinemas to guarantee these films the number of «runs» all over the country to which they are entitled by reason of their artistic value. The ordinary commercial cinema, which plays each film, whatever its quality, for three, or at most six days, is unable to fulfil this purpose.

It has, however, recently become clear even to the big British and American companies that films of a higher quality cannot be handled in the same way as the ordinary mass-produced trash. This was shown recently by a most important

development which had occurred in Glasgow: after Laurence Olivier's «HENRY V» had had a short and rather unsuccessful run at the Glasgow première theatre of the Rank Organisation, the Cosmo Cinema, a specialised cinema, similar to the Academy in London, gave it a lengthy and extremely successful «second run». This so impressed the Rank Organisation, that they gave the Cosmo the première run in Glasgow of Olivier's «HAMLET» in the belief that it would there draw bigger crowds and higher box-office receipts than in any of their own cinemas — and they were not disappointed! The Academy had had similar successes in London with commercially «difficult» American films like the now famous «STRANGE INCIDENT», John Steinbeck's «FORGOTTEN VILLAGE» and Hemingway's «SPANISH EARTH», as well as with feature-length British documentaries, such as Paul Rotha's «LAND OF PROMISE», Jack Lee's «CHILDREN ON TRIAL» (produced by Basil Wright) and John Eldridge's «OUR COUNTRY».

But such things are only a beginning. The more intelligent British and American producers are beginning to realise that there is a growing need for films of a higher quality than heretofore, if the public — a considerably better-educated and more alert public than that of the last generation — is not to lose all interest in their films. The greater the number of really first-rate films produced, however, the more unsatisfactory the present distribution and exhibiting arrangements will become. Whenever a film of genuine artistic merit is made in this country its producers immediately experience difficulties in distributing it within the framework of their own organisation; the industry as a whole is therefore slowly awakening to the need for specialised cinemas all over the country, which will not only ensure a showing for foreign language films, but also for high-quality English and American productions.

In Hoellering's view the only real solution to these problems is the splitting in two of the present distribution and exhibiting arrangements. On the one hand the ordinary commercial cinemas will continue much as before, showing the usual mass-produced rubbish and changing their programmes every three days. They will recruit their audiences from among those who are prepared to go to each programme of their «local» regardless of what is being shown — a policy which will be especially successful in districts where housing is bad, and cinemas have the attraction of being warm and comfortable. On the other hand new specialised cinemas will shoot up like mushrooms as soon as building restrictions are lifted. They will cater for audiences who regard the film as a serious form of art. It is in these cinemas that the future of the film will be vested, as it seems likely that the ordinary cinema will more and more lose its bored and apathetic public to the music-hall, variety and football, not to talk of new developments like television which will gradually supersede it as a form of popular recreation.

Hoellering gave it as his opinion that a series of long runs at 100 specialised cinemas of a type similar to the Academy or the Cosmo would cover the production costs of high quality films, provided that these costs had not been extravagant. His company and Mr. Singleton's in Glasgow were now working out plans for the establishment of such a chain of cinemas. If these plans succeeded, the production and distribution of artistically valuable films would, for the first time, be placed on a firm economic basis in this country.

Hoellering's views on this subject carry a special weight, because he is not only a cinema director and distributor; he is himself a film producer well-known for his films «HORTOBAGY», which he produced and directed in Hungary, and «MESSAGE FROM CANTERBURY», produced in collaboration with the late Archbishop Temple during the recent war. He is now engaged in the preparations for a film version of T. S. Eliot's «MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL». He stated that he would give practical effect to his views by distributing «MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL» in the same way as he now distributes his large collection of outstanding continental films such as the Italian «PAISA», the German «DIE MOERDER SIND UNTER UNS» («THE MURDERERS ARE AMONGST US»), the Danish «DIES IRAE» (DAY OF WRATH»), the Swedish «HETS» («FRENZY») and the Swiss «MARIE-LOUISE», through his distribution company, Film Traders Limited.

He summed up by saying that, in spite of the persistent demand of a large public, outstanding foreign films did not get enough showings in this country, owing to the outdated system of distribution. Only when specialised cinemas existed all over Britain in sufficient numbers would films of genuine artistic value, irrespective of language or country of origin, at last find a permanent home, active encouragement and adequate financial returns.

John A.V. BURKE
Hon. Secretary, Catholic Film Institute,
Vice-President of the O.C.I.C.

CATHOLIC STUDENTS AND THE WORLD FILM

In the first number of the *International Film Review*, Roger Millot, President of *Pax Romana*, stressed the importance of the part which Catholic intellectuals can play in moulding the cinema more to the requirements of Christian art and conscience. In passing, let me register the sense of embarrassment which we in England tend to feel when confronted with the word "intellectual" in this context; it savours so much of the pedantic and the "high-brow"; we know what it means but we are shy of the label. The word slips much more easily and convincingly off the Continental tongue.

Be that as it may, it is clear that, as Mr. Millot implied, Catholics of the intellectual, University classes, have played considerably less than their fair share in the development of the Seventh Art in this country. Whereas the non-Catholic and all too often anti-Catholic university-bred man has turned to the film, and produced first-class work, I can, at the moment, think of no Catholic names among the first flight of film makers. This is because Catholic educationalists have tented to despise or ignore the cinema.

Therefore it is a source of gratification that, at last in this country, the University Catholics are taking notice of the cinema and beginning to accord it its proper place among the educational influences. During the past year the Secretary of the Catholic Film Society has given lectures and arranged conferences at Oxford, Cambridge, Bristol, Manchester, Birmingham, London. These lectures have been attended by undergraduates and have served to awaken interest in the problems connected with the cinema.

At Newcastle, the Union of Catholic Students, which has affiliations in all the English Universities, held a Regional Conference during the week-end of February 25th — 27th, 1949. The theme of the Conference was *The Film and Theatre in Contemporary Culture*. It was attended by a large number of students representing most of the English Universities. The Theatre was not much in the picture except as a source of comparison of criticism with the cinema, though among the team of speakers was Maurice Braddell, Actor and screen and play writer, whose main talk dealt with the Theatre which he claimed to be superior to the cinema at almost every point. The other speakers were Miss Kathleen Rowland, Film Critic of the *Universe*, England's most prominent Catholic weekly, Bernard McNabb, screenwriter, and Father J. A. V. Burke, of the Catholic Film Society.

The tone of the approach to the Conference was set by the paragraph in the programme which introduced the subjects and pointed out that "The Conference has been prompted by the increasing necessity for Catholic Students to recognise the importance of the Films. Each one of us is in some small way a critic. Our criticism must be reinforced with knowledge if it is to be valid".

The subjects dealt with by the speakers included "*The Catholic Approach to Film*" (J. A. V. Burke); "*Film Criticism*" (Kathleen Rowland); "*The Script Writer*" (Bernard Mc Nabb) and "*Dramatic Criticism*" (Maurice Braddell).

The most important part of the Conference was the discussion groups into which the students formed after the Saturday lectures. These groups discussed the Film in relation to religion, art, education, moral standards and propaganda, and a summary of the conclusions arrived at during these discussions was given at the close of the Conference.

It is not possible to give an adequate account of these discussions here but it will be of interest to mention a few of the points made, points which reflect great credit on the perspicacity of the students.

On the subject of religion and film, the students thought that only those films in which the religious element grows naturally out of the film could be regarded as satisfactory. Sanctity, they felt, could not truly be communicated by the medium of film; it was likely that the "saint" would be presented "autocratically", as a person already holy. Standards of integrity must be high in order to render the religious film attractive to the general public. It was remarked that, on this score, "SONG OF BERNADETTE" left something to be desired.

Teaching films, it was decided, were too much in the hands of the commercialist. The result is that the teachers, for whom such films should be primarily a teaching instrument, are frequently relegated to the position of film projectionist. Educational films should be confined mainly to background films. Documentaries are not strictly educational, rather they are propaganda films and should be made to help adult education.

With regard to propaganda films, the students held that there was much to be desired in the news films that are at present distributed. The reporting is inadequate and one-sided. There was for example no reporting about conditions in Hungary when news shots of the Mindszenty trial were included in the British news reels. News editors should know what the public ought to see and take care to give it them. Film magazines such as *March of Time* and *This Modern Age*, though capable of being made to favour one side at the expense of the other are useful and valuable means of film discussion. In the case of the trial of Cardinal Mindszenty, it could be shown by appealing to such agnostic authors as Julian Huxley, for example, that there is a reason why the spiritual conception of life which we hold is at variance with the materialistic evolutionary theories held by the Marxists. It could be made clear that man's evolution has reached the stage where moral values are perceived and admissible, and that such values are to be accepted even by the Marxists, if they wish to remain faithful to their theories, and that, therefore, the persecution of thinkers like Mindszenty is strictly in conflict with the theory of evolution. An imaginative use of diagrams and quotations from the atheistic writers could do much to make the Catholic case presentable to the general public in the cinemas.

The question of morality in films caused great interest but the students were not always well-equipped with defi-

nitions and so could not make their points sufficiently clear. It was debated whether there is such a thing as entertainment in which the moral question does not arise. Every film must have *some* effect on its audience though this effect may be difficult to measure. Is it possible to have films which are artistically excellent but morally bad? Can it be proved that the prevalence of divorce has anything to do with the cinema? It was claimed by some that "THE FALLEN IDOL" was an immoral film since it showed a young boy telling lies to save his friend and also being made privy to attempted adultery. But the majority of the students felt that this could not be maintained. The film was a study in child psychology and was almost clinical in its approach. What is more dangerous in films is the subtle immorality by suggestion, where materialistic rewards follow the breech of moral standards, and where moral standards are made to seem relatively unimportant.

The definition of film as an art form baffled the students. There are so many varying conceptions of the definition of art and it was not possible to reach agreement. The building of the great cathedrals and the performance of a great orchestra were brought in as aids to reach a definition but without much success. In general it was thought that individual performances on the part of actors and cameramen could be dignified with the name of art but that there was too much of the merely mechanical involved in the making of films for it safely to be called an art.

It is not important that the views expressed at conferences such as these are vague and inaccurate. What is important is that the young intellectuals of the future are giving their minds to the problems of film and the cinema and it cannot be too greatly stressed that conferences such as these should be multiplied.

J. A. V. B.

C. A. LEJEUNE
Filmcritic "The Observer", London

BRITISH FILMS

C. A. LEJEUNE DISCUSSES THE PRESENT POSITION

C. A. Lejeune is one of the few film critics in England who have a reputation extending beyond the limits of those who frequent the cinema. Her views on films are a source of delight to a large reading audience who never darken the doors of a cinema. In the truest sense of the word she teaches film appreciation because even though some of her readers may not frequently go to the cinema they are, nevertheless, equipped by her remarks to discuss the latest film intelligently. It is not to be supposed, however, that her influence is restricted to the elderly highbrow who rests securely at home. She is one of the most influential writers about the cinema and is accepted as such by the young and enthusiastic among all ages of filmgoers.

Her views on British films are of great importance. They are controversial, perhaps, but few would be chary enough to challenge her main premises. In a recent interview we asked her to say something about the present condition of British films. For an all too short but glorious period British films were among the few artistic and significant products meriting the description "film art". C. A. Lejeune is reluctant to allow the use of the term "Art" in connection with films. Nevertheless, she admits that at their best they were among the most worth while things coming from the film factories. The deplorable collapse of British film in the last two years both from the point of view of art and craft is dealt with in the following article.

It would be stupid in the eyes of the world, and shortsighted in our own interests, to pretend that the British cinema of to-day is in a flourishing condition. With one or two exceptions, the films that are coming out of our studios now are minor makeshift jobs, designed simply to fill up a quota, and lacking in intelligence and bite. The same thing may be said of Hollywood, but in our own case the condition is more distressing, because it follows a period of florescence in which, for the first time, Britain could really be regarded as a major factor in the world of cinema production.

That this period should have coincided with the war years is not really curious. Cut off very largely from contact with other countries, forced to use our own artists, our own technicians, and our own resources, we developed a native cinema that was wholly indigenous, and sprang from the deep roots of life in this island. It was hard in those days to get money and studio space, and harder still to get

man-power, and the result was that every film had to stand on its merits, and the producers make up in imagination for what they lacked in facilities.

In a way, the film-makers of those days had an easier task than their modern prototypes. There was a sense of urgency in the air, which affected audiences as much as the people in the studios. Films were not only officially regarded, but instinctively felt, to be part of our war effort: a testament of our will to win, and a reflection of the sort of world we were fighting for. It was not difficult to find subjects that were at once propaganda and very simple, human documents, familiar in their appeal to every member of the audience. Scripts came almost ready-made out of the emergency: every service had its story; every individual in each service had his or her own story. The result was a row of splendid films like "THE WAY TO THE STARS" *(the R.A.F. Story)*, "THE WAY AHEAD" *(the Army story)*, "IN WHICH WE SERVE" *(the Navy story)*, "ONE OF OUR AIRCRAFT IS MISSING", "49th PARALLEL", "THIS HAPPY BREED", "SAN DEMETRIO LONDON", "THE GENTLE SEX" and many others.

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We cannot compete with Hollywood in making the sort of film that Hollywood has practised for more than a quarter of a century — and why should we want to? This is the time for us to consider soberly, as the French, with their limited resources, have blessedly been compelled to do, how we can make the best use of the material round about us, our native talent, our native traditions, and our native humour. Great Britain is a very small island, but there are enough stories in it to outlast the lifetime of most islanders. During the war, our films warmed the hearts of our troops abroad, because they could look at the screen and say, "That's the street where I live . . . "That's the hill behind my mother's home . . . That's my local bus . . ." I should like to make it compulsory for every British film producer from time to time to leave his dinners at Claridge's, to lay up his car, and go out by bus or train or foot to see how the rest of England lives. There are a surprising lot of ideas and territory that do not lie within a taxi-ride of Piccadilly Circus.

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But the final result was negative and proved that the industry of the seventh art in Argentine is rather disorganized and confused, as we already pointed out in a preceding issue of the International Film Review. There are some technical improvements, but in regard of art most of the films are deficient.

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seeming to throw a mischievous fluid upon those about him.

The Society Lumiton continues to produce a series of films manifestly immoral. The recent "UN HOMBRE SOLO NO VALE NADA" (a single man is worth nothing) has been interpreted by Enrique Serrano and Amelia Vargas, a couple of artists specialists in films prohibited for the youth.

"LAS AVENTURES DE JACK", the Argentine version of Jack by Daudet was a resounding failure for the scenarist Carlos Borcosque, the actor Juan Carlos Barbieri and the producer Miguel Machinandiarena. The two first, whose prestige had already suffered from the insuccess of "EL TAMBOR DE TACUARIS" are flatly compromised by this unhappy endeavour. Numerous critics say that only an excessive propaganda had brought the young Barbieri to the first rank. So much for what concerns Mr. Machinandiarena, he is already familiarized with the insuccesses, his last production "DON BILGIGER EN PAGO MILAGRO" having raised a hue and cry against.

"UN TROPEZAN CUALQUIERA DA EN LA VID" with the tango-singer Alberto Castillo has brought big money. "LA OTRA Y YO" met an almost favorable reception with Amelia Bence. The film "POR QUE MINTIO LA CIGUENA" with Suzana Freyre has also been presented.

The semi-documentary style brought forth by Rossellini and other Italian producers has been tried succesfully by the Argentine cinema in the film "APENAS UN DELINQUENTE". The scenarist Hugo Fregonese engaged at Hollywood after his success of his film "DONDE MUEREN LAS PALABRAS" has realized a film of high quality. The subject has been handled in a way which remembers the technique of Hellinger in "THE NAKED CITY" (La cité sans voile) but he does not content himself by copying, he solely draws his inspiration from it, and that is different. Unhappily a scene of sensuality in a night-club makes this film troublesome for Catholic public. Nevertheless it remains the positive result of an experiment proving that our national cinema is able to properly treat particular subjects of the kind of semi-documentary.

*

The personality of the creole singer Carlos Gardel is a powerful magnet to the public. "SE LLAMABA CARLOS CARDEL", produced by the *Emelco,* directed by Leon Klimovsky (actually in Spain) was the best prove. Interpreted by Robert Escalada its main attraction is the voice of Gardela recorded with great fidelity. This film satisfies the public easy to please.

*

Alberto de Zavalia, producer of "ROSA DE AMERICA", a film about the life of Ste. Rose of Lima, who has been absent for a while will direct Enrique Muino — a patriarchal personage of the Argentine cinema — as well as his wife, Delia Garces in "PADRE DESCONOCIDO". The critic ridiculed the verbiage and the doubtful quality of the dialogue.

At the moment we write these notes, is presented the film "VIDALITA" by Luis Saslavsky, with Mirta Legrand in the principal role.

"GONE WITH THE WIND" (Autant en emporte le vent) is on the screen for 27 weeks (it is a revival!). "SITTING PRETTY" and "LE CORBEAU" presented with a scandalous publicity met also a great success.

The problem of the interdiction of Italian films by the Direction of Spectacles has not been cleared until now.

The Company *Republic* of North-America presently prepares "LA VENGADORE" with John Caroll and Adèle Mara in two languages. We think that this design will be a miscarriage, on account of the unequal quality of the actors. The publicity presents these two artists as "stars from Hollywood" but the public remains sceptic.

Jaime Potenze

BELGIUM

BRITISH FILMS IN BELGIUM

Amongst the avalanche of films which descended upon Belgium immediately after the liberation, all of them were well received at the time, "THE WAY AHEAD", a very individual production animated by a human veracity which was missing from most of the work shown, stood out.

Not until later, when comparisons could be made, was it realised that "THE WAY AHEAD" marked the resurgence of the British film.

Other successes, notably the remarkable "BRIEF ENCOUNTER", and "IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY" and "ODD MAN OUT", came to confirm that we were witnessing no passing phenomenon and that the British film was a living reality and merited one of the foremost places in the industry.

The connoisseurs rapidly showed their preference for British films, but it was not so with the bulk of the public, which was completely baffled by the specifically British atmosphere. Monumental miscalculations in presenting certain films added to the confusion. Only a few weeks ago the fine film, "BRIGHTON ROCK", was given a premiere in a small cinema specialising in adventure films, under the grotesque title "GANG DES TUEURS" (Killer Gang).

Outside intellectual circles English films met with small success. "THE WINSLOW BOY" and "QUARTER" were confined to the specialist halls, where they won high regard. The general public

favoured more sensational films, such as "NO ORCHIDS FOR MISS BLANDISH", "BLACK NARCISSUS", in which the colour was the great attraction, and "RED SHOES", with its ravishing and immensely popular ballet.

Recent months have seen an undeniable lowering of quality in British production, at least if we are to judge by what has been shown on our screens. "THE WINSLOW BOY" and "QUARTET" were, indeed, acclaimed. But with them came "SARABAND FOR DEAD LOVERS" and "THE WOMAN IN THE HALL" to indicate that the industry is in need of renewal. "EUROPA STOCKADE" could not supplant "THE OVERLANDERS".

An altogether remarkable phenomenon is the extraordinary and enduring success of "HAMLET". It is curious to note that, in retrospect, this enthusiam is not entirely shared by the intellectual public and the critics. They were carried away at the first showing. Since than, Orson Welles's "MACBETH" has started up interminable and impassioned debates on Shakespeare and the screen. The resultant impression is that while "HAMLET" was possibly overestimated, it is possible that too little attention was paid to "HENNRY V".

Leo Lunders

DENMARK

Critical Review of Films shown in Denmark from October 1948 to April 1949

Since October 1948 117 new motion pictures have been presented to the cinema-going public in Denmark. Of these, only 4 are feature-length productions from our own studios. Three are fictional films, the fourth is a documentary based on the life of H. M. King Frederik IX. The majority of the remaining 113 films are from American production companies or from distributors in contact with American groups.

Of this number perhaps 25 films are worthy of special mention and though not all of them were outstanding successes, the fact that 25 first-ranking foreign films have been shown in their original versions in Denmark (we know nothing of doubled versions here) is a satisfactory indication of the artistic standard of Danish film-fare.

The list is as follows. The figures in parentheses are the dates of their first showing in Copenhagen. "CARNEGIE HALL" (20—10), "CLUNY BROWN" (29—10), "HEARTBEAT" (29—10), "BOOMERANG" (1—11), "HAMLET" (8—11), "NAKED CITY" (11—11), "BUSH CHRISTMAS" (10—12), "BATAILLE SUR L'EAU LOURDE" (13—12), "OLIVER TWIST" (22—12), "HELL-ZAPOPPIN" (29—12), "DIABLE AU CORPS" (7—1—49), "G. I. JOE" (12—1), "SONG OF BERNADETTE" (24—1), "A FOREIGN AFFAIR" (2—2), "TREASURE OF SIERRA MADRE" (4—2), "LA FERME DU PENDU" (21—2), "THE RED SHOES" (2—3), "FABIOLA" (4—3 world premiere), "SITTING PRETTY" (14—3), "KISS OF DEATH" (21—3), "ALL MY SONS" (21—3), "IT HAD TO BE YOU" (28—3), "GUEST IN THE HOUSE" (6—4), "DOROTHÉE CHERCHE L'AMOUR" (19—4) and "THE GREEN YEARS" (20—4).

The new Danish films include one full-length documentary, three feature length entertainment films and 17 short documentaries. "HVOR ER FAR" (Where is Dad?) produced by Palladium, directed by Charles Tharnaes, from an adaptation of Jean de Latraz's play "BICHON", is moraliy harmless but artistically so bad that it is a wonder that any production company would release it. Comedy, slapstick, romance. Lead actors: Ib Schonberg, Ellen Gottschalck and Johannes Meyer. "DET GAELDER OS ALLE" (We are All at Stake) is another Palladium production, directed by Alice O'Fredericks from Svend Rindom's play "CHILD FROM VIENNA" and was made with the assistance of the "RED CROSS" and "SAVE THE CHILD" organisations. Its leading actors include Paul Reichhardt (the Danish Red Cross Doctor in Austria), Lisbeth Movin (his fiancée) Ilselil Larsen (the Austrian child who is brought to Denmark for rehabilitation) and Ib Schonberg (the child's Danish host). The film deals with the problems connected with rescuing children from starvation, sickness and danger and demands that everyone do all he can to help such children even if they speak German (as the Austrians do). The film has had great success both in Copenhagen and throughout the country. In my opinion, which seems to be rather singular in Denmark, the film is too sentimental and not sufficently profound in facing up to the problems it poses. The child should be, it seems to me, a German child, not necessarily even an anti-Nazi child. In this way the problem would be more acute and reach that height which demands that children be saved no matter what their nationality or politics. This has not been done. We are presented with a Viennese child whose father was put in a concentration camp because of an anti-hitler book which he had written and who was herself from a concentration camp. This makes it too easy to accept the responsibility of caring such a child. Though she speaks German, she is not, in fact a true German. After I had reviewed this film rather severely on the radio I was told that it was in bad form to have done so because the film has good qualities even though it is not exactly as I would wish it to have been.

"KAMPEN MOD URETTEN" (Fight Against Injustice) is produced by Nordisk Films and Dansk Kulturfilm and directed by Ole Palsbo from a script by Leck Fischer based on the biography of the late Peter Sabroe, the Danish social politician whose life was devoted to helping unfortunate and

destitute children. Nogens Wieth plays Sabroe and gives an extremely good performance. Other actors are Karin Nellemose, Ib Schonberg and Louis Miethe-Renard. I consider this one of the best Danish pictures which may be shown abroad without hesitation. It contains a great idea which has been brought to the screen in a magnificent way. Everything happened as depicted in Denmark in the years around 1900, when Sabroe was an M. P. The film might have been called: "Did'nt You Hear a Child Crying?"

Danish short-film production has reached a considerable size and in quality has been described, from the English point of view, as third best in the world. Of the new documentaries I shall mention a few. Ole Berggreen has released "GERMAN FUGITIVES IN DENMARK", an interesting record from the fugitive administration's point of view of these unhappy people and their life in our country in 1944—1949. Carl Th. Dreyer and the late Preben Frank have made a film about our greatest sculptor, "THORVALDSEN"; zoologist Erik Knudson has begun an interesting series with "SEXTON BEETLE" and "WHITE BUTTERFLY", followed by "MIKKEL" by Carl Weissmann and Jorgen Roos, a true story about a fox cub and its encounter with a human. Johan Jaccobsen has directed an extremely exciting film about road accidents entitled "IT IS UP TO YOU NEXT TIME". Some curious processes come from Soren Melson (originally a painter) who has drawn directly on the film for a strip entitled "LA LARME" and another called "PUNKT-PRAELUDIUM" in the style of Len Lye, and Jorgen Roos has, in "OPUS 1", scratched with the edge of a knife on a black filmstrip producing a very funny little film, together with another called "NEW ORLEANS". Finally, Ole Sevel has made "CIPHERS' SPEECH", a political economical description of Denmark after the war, made in the style of Norman MacLaren, and "FAIRY-TALE ABOUT A CITY", an impressive tale about the city of rheumatism, gout and arthritis, a city where every seventh Dane is living.

Our national production, therefore, has not come to an end yet. Film-companies are hard hit by the economical difficulties but they carry on with their work. Up to the present they have not forgotten their artistic mission. We have every hope for the future.

Björn Rasmussen

FRANCE

Recent French Production

The French films shown in Paris this spring are illustrative of two trends of the cinema: that of the "filmic" subject, executed by skilled directors with well known stars, and that of the film which has some originality, is made from slender resources and has a less brilliant distribution. This latter type of film, although certainly inferior to the former, is often of greater interest.

"LE SECRET DE MAYERLING" must be placed in the first category. The romantic and mysterious story of the Archduke Rodolphe de Habsbourg is a typical example of the producer's idea of the perfect film subject. Anatole Litvak had been the last to use this story, with Charles Boyer and Danielle Darrieux in the leading roles. He is succeeded by Jean Delannoy, who brings to the film the somewhat frigid perfection of his faultless talent. But is it perhaps inaccurate to talk of these re-creations in terms of innovation and creation? The story of Mayerling, although curiously varied, remains a fact. It is easier for the actors to bring something new to it than for the authors. In this film Jean Marais gives further proof of the qualities which make him the most popular male star in France today. Dominique Blanchar, his co-star, is the daughter of Pierre Blanchar, who gives such a remarkable performance in "DOCTEUR LAËNNEC." Whatever may be said, real talent is needed if the bearer of a famous name is to win appreciation in his or her own right: Dominique Blanchar is a notable comedienne: trained in the theatre by Louis Jouvet, her first important film role augurs a brilliant future.

Jean Grémillon, author of the beautiful film, "LE CIEL EST A VOUS", has not produced any film of note for several years. Now he gives us "PATTES BLANCHES", with scenario and dialogue by Jean Anouilh, whose skill was shown in his success with "MONSIEUR VINCENT". To many his collaboration on "MONSIEUR VINCENT" seems a sort of parenthesis in Anouilh's career, his work for the theatre (possibly the most brilliant of recent years) being typical of the disquiet and moral disarray of the age. "PATTES BLANCHES" is the tale of a girl of easy virtue whom a tradesman takes to his small port home as his wife. She gives herself in succession to the village squire and to his half-brother, and is depicted as a siren who instantaneously unleashes every form of sensual passion. Despite Grémillon's evident directorial skill this film is worth about as much as its subject.

Shown almost at the same time as "PATTES BLANCHES" was "SIX JUIN A L'AUBE", a short film made by Grémillon several years ago, with the Normandy landings as subject. It is a clear cut account of the events of those few weeks which were so important in the history of France and of the world. In it authentic documents are mingled in a most interesting and original way with ruined vistas and the most vivid and moving eye-witness accounts. An interesting detail is that Grémillon, one of the very few directors who are also musicians, composed the music for "SIX JUIN A L'AUBE" himself.

In the domain of the major film which leaves the well beaten track of romance or drama of passion, "PAYSANS NOIRS" must have pride of place. Based on a book by a colonial government official, the film was made in Haute Volta, in native Africa. Founded on fact, it therefore portrays real people and events that really took place. It resurrects the hope, raised by the cinema in its early days and subsequently so often shattered, of a new means of discovering the world. Audiences are always glad to escape from the studio to a world hitherto unknown: here the negro village is a real village, the landscape is really African and every least detail is of interest. Doubtless the story suffers somewhat from this documentary approach, and the story-tellers appear to forget about their plot. But the theme, the transformation of a country under white influence, is one that will often be treated by the cinema, and it is approached here with honesty and impartiality. And what fine and sometimes overwhelming actors are these negroes in camparison with the few play-acting whites who show them how things should be done.

"LES NOCES DE SABLE", made in Southern Morocco, another part of French Africa, also has the charm of unfamiliar surroundings and exoticism, but it lacks the lovely simplicity of "PAYSANS NOIRS". Here the exoticism is literary: the story, set in Southern Morocco with mainly native characters, is based on an Arab legend with a Tristan and Iseult theme. The film is almost entirely silent, with a sound commentary. The French commentary is spoken by Jean Cocteau, the poet, and his voice is at times rather irritating. On the whole an interesting and unusual film, which gives rise to a wish for the development of film co-operation between France and the countries of French Africa.

Three other films made in France with slender financial resources have also the merit of "PAYSANS NOIRS" and "NOCES DE SABLE" in that they manage to break out of the ordinary limits of film and eschew the conventional story.

"CES DAMES AUX CHAPEAUX VERTS" is a minor work whose rather scamped direction leaves much to be desired. It must be mentioned, nevertheless, as an indication of how the cinema can find subjects of interest in psychological and social studies without descending to sensationalism. Germaine Acremant's amusing and unpretentious novel has already been made into a much played stage piece. The film preserves its character of cheerful trifle, with the addition of jokes which are often feeble enough: but the treatment of the subject, the life of the provincial spinster, is not without veracity and, sometimes, emotion.

On the same amused and amusing note, "L'ECOLE BUISSONNIERE" treats an equally ancient problem, the reformation of teaching in primary schools. In "CES DAMES AUX CHAPEAUX VERTS" we were shown the life of a small provincial town, and here, always on the comic note, we see the life of a French village. A young teacher arrives after the 1914—1918 war and causes a violent upheaval in the village by introducing new methods which immediately win the hearts of the children. Successful examination results defeat the opposition of the partisans of tradition. As in "PAYSANS NOIRS" and even "CES DAMES AUX CHAPEAUX VERTS", "L'ECOLE BUISSONNIERE" holds the attention because it is based on a true story and is a picture of real life and not a contrived scenario within the conventional frame. This film proves that it is perfectly possible to "get across" many truths and to entertain at the same time.

"JOUR DE FÊTE" is a comedy, but not of manners; it is almost a burlesque. The comic vein has seemed worked out in France, and the ineptitudes of Fernandel and Bourvil have not compensated for the lack of films in the tradition of the works of the silent days, works which can still make us laugh. The originality of "JOUR DE FÊTE" lies in the making of a comedy whose shots are all exteriors, with a little village of central France for decor. The leading role is played by Jacques Tati, a music hall artist little known in the cinema, who wrote the scenario and guaranteed production costs. No financier would back this original film, and before it could be made a small production company, helped by a group of friends, had to be willing to take a risk. The film is excellent in spite of imperfections in the sound track: the photography, frequently neglected in comedy, is often very beautiful. Without ever sacrificing the comic to the aesthetic, the makers have contrived to mix beautiful landscapes and delightful views of the little village with all the details of its daily life. The inhabitants play themselves; the various characters keep their veracity, if they sometimes make us smile; the village postman, played by Tati, raises side-splitting laughs. A succession of gags, some of them very original although within the tradition of the old film comedies, is interpolated into the thread of an unpretentious story, which evolves around the village fête and the adventures of a rather simple postman whose head has been turned by a film on the American postal service.

J.-L. Tallenay

GREAT BRITAIN

Films of the Quarter in Great Britain

An atmosphere of crisis still pervades the cinema world in England but there is now perceptible a lightening of the skies and the studios begin to hum again. The native production has been far from elevating this year but hope springs eternal in the critical breast. There are signs, «no bigger than a man's hand», that films of worth

are struggling to be born. A Director like Henry Cornelius makes «PASSPORT TO PIMLICO» which arouses in the minds of the critics nostalgic memories of René Clair's best work. Dame Edith Evans, a stage actress of first-class reputation, makes her first two films, «QUEEN OF SPADES» and «LAST DAYS OF DOLWYN», and the critics compare her more than favourably with Françoise Rosay and Arletty; an unimportant film like «FLOODTIDE» introduces a group of vivacious and talented youngsters, like Jimmy Logan, Janet Brown and Elizabeth Sellars, and the critics look longingly to the future when these promising players have been provided with the appropriate acting material with which to prove their worth. A rather dull film like «THEM THAT TRESPASS» startles the critics with two first-class performances from comparatively unknown players, Rosalyn Boulter and Richard Todd. For his work in the same film Michael Medwin, who has already won his way into the critics' favour by his consistently skilful performances in «AN IDEAL HUSBAND», «NIGHTBEAT», «LOOK BEFORE YOU LOVE», and others, is now spoken of as a successor to Charles Laughton at his earliest and best.

From the creative side, therefore, there is promise and hope, but it is distressing to have to say that some of the production chiefs seem seized with a bad attack of the jitters. Having, on the strength of an unexpected success or two during the war and immediately after, when British film morale was high, stepped up into the commercial clouds, some well-known names lost their heads and their integrity at the same time. Now we have the spectacle of skilled screen-writers in the economic wilderness while one of the major production companies is offering prizes of £ 50 in a competition for scripts! Luxury yachts, mansions in Park Lane and villas in the Mediterranean are all too often a sign of cultural decadence as far as films are concerned.

This is not to say that big money and good films cannot go together but it would seem that too many people are mainly concerned in films with the object of big money and either do not know or at least do not worry whether the film itself is good. As a well-known actor said to me the other day. «In times of crisis one sees many starving actors but few starving producers.»

There is not space here to develop the point adequately but one may at least mention the fact that some producers are showing signs of peevishness with the critics because their films are described, accurately, as the pot-boiling, box-office stop-gaps they are. Were they honestly concerned with giving the public what it wants, they would be glad to have the cooperation of the critic in helping to raise the literary and cultural standard of the film.

There has been an evident attempt to supply the comedies which, we are told, the British public are eager to see. The results have not been very successful. The most notable failure is «CARDBOARD CAVALIER», with Sid Field and Margaret Lockwood, a coloured farce on the days of Cromwell. The lack of success is due not to the inability of Sid Field, one of our most original drolls, but to the lack of imagination of those who placed him in such unsuitable surroundings. «MAYTIME IN MAYFAIR», is another Wilcox-Neagle attempt to drain the last drop of moisture from their very well-tried West-end formula. Anna Neagle and Michael Wilding will please the groundlings but I wager that this is the last of the series. Some neat script-writing and dialogue is to be found in «IT'S NOT CRICKET», a comedy vehicle for Basil Radford and Naunton Wayne, and, as Bernard Knowles, the director, told me, every possible situation likely to make people laugh has been packed into «THE PERFECT WOMAN». Patricia Roc, Nigel Patrick and Stanley Holloway succeed very well in raising the laughs by means of a robot woman which has to be taken out into society.

By far the best of the comedies is «PASSPORT TO PIMLICO», in which a new vein and a new vitality has been struck. The ideas that flow from the notion that a small part of London is, in fact, Burgundian property, gives Stanley Holloway, Hermione Baddeley, Margaret Rutherford and Paul Dupuis the chance to wring some dry humour out of the present austerities prevailing in England.

A group of films made in England with American directors and stars is, possibly, one way of trying to cut across the «quota» controversy which is still engaging the attention of British and American cinema executives. «BRITANNIA MEWS» with Maureen O'Hara and Dana Andrews is a dull Edwardian melodrama which adds to nobody's reputation. «EDWARD MY SON», mad by M-G-M with Spencer Tracy and Deborah Kerr fails to impress in spite of the splendid performances of the principals, mainly because it

smacks too strongly of the theatre. Yet, as «Q» says in «Focus», what makes the film specially remarkable is the way in which, sometimes rather subtly, it shows that *worldliness is a failure even in this world*». Another American-British effort which is spoilt by the failure of the American director, Gregory Ratoff, to appreciate the characteristic tempo and feeling of life in England is «THAT DANGEROUS AGE» in which Myrna Loy gives less than her usually satisfying best and Roger Livesey is twisted out of his customary calm to give an unconvincing imitation of Hollywood's idea of an eminent English barrister.

Another feature of film life in Britain now, complementary to the invasion by American technicians, is the migration of British units to the Continent: primarily, I imagine, to cut studio costs. Whatever the future may hold for us in this connection (and we are expecting something very interesting from Peter Ustinov's «PRIVATE ANGELO») quite the worst thing that has happened is something called «THE GOLDEN MADONNA», in which poor Phyllis Calvert, one of our most refined and sensitive players, cavorts about in a swim suit looking for a «valuable» missing painting.

A group of undistinguished thrillers includes «CASE OF CHARLES PEACE», «MAN ON THE RUN», and «THEM THAT TRESPASS». The latter, as I have already remarked, is saved from the waste paper basket by the promising performances of two new actors. This note of promise is also maintained by «NOW BARABBAS», an impelling study of life in prison, in which Richard Burton, adds to the reputation he made in «LAST DAYS OF DOLWYN», and a team of first-class players are so good that it is impossible here to do justice to them. Kathleen Harrison, William Hartnell, Beatrice Campbell, Ronald Howard, to mention only a few, prove that the British studios need think themselves inferior to none in acting talent.

Anatole De Grunewald, the producer of «LAST DAYS OF DOLWYN», «NOW BARABBAS» and «QUEEN OF SPADES», is setting a new standard for worthwhile films in this country. Three remarkable productions in a line which wring eulogies from first-rank critics, is no mean feat. It is true that he is backed up in two of these films by a name, new to the screen but of great eminence on the stage, and that Edith Evans could make the reputation of any producer lucky enough to cast her, but de Grunewald deserves great credit for breaking fresh ground both in players and story. «QUEEN OF SPADES», based on Pushkin's Faustlegend, conjures up a Russian atmosphere that is not unworthy of the Russian school itself, and in addition to the quite outstanding performance of Edith Evans as the bedevilled Countess, provides some promising acting from Yvonne Mitchell, a newcomer to films; from Ronald Howard who absorbs more and more of his famous father's charm with every new film; and a curious study in melodramatic frenzy by Anton Walbrook.

Emlyn Williams, the brilliant actor and playwright wrote and directed «LAST DAYS OF DOLWYN». It is a story of Wales in which the spirit of that land of singers and evangelical emotion is delightfully evoked. Its outstanding elements are the beautiful composition of place, faithfully interpreted by the camera, and the creation by Edith Evans of the widow, Merri. Without any question it is one of the best performances from an actress in this or any other country this year. An unnecessarily laboured ending marks the perfection of this beautiful film. New vistas of poetic cinema are opened up by it and we eagerly await new work from this talented combination of cineastes.

There are several foreign films which have made a special mark in London this quarter. «JOAN OF ARC» is in its third month at the London Pavilion. «SNAKE PIT», the controversial film dealing with lunacy, has had the most outspoken criticisms, pro and con, experienced by any film for years. The Danish «DITTE, CHILD OF MAN», has captured the public fancy; «GERMANY YEAR ZERO», was a failure from the point of view of London audiences; «ANGELINA», after a personal appearance by Anna Magnani, has had a long run at the Academy, one of the bestknown specialist cinemas in London. «MONSIEUR VINCENT» continues his triumphant tour around the country, creating an all-time record for a foreign film in England. It is with pardonable modesty that we claim this to be largely due to the energetic publicising campaign of the Catholic Film Society, as well, of course, as to the intrinsic worth of the film itself.

J. A. V. Burke

HOLLAND

QUARTERLY BULLETIN

The second Dutch film made in the *Cinetone Studios* at Duivendrecht has not proved to be as

successful as "NIET TEVERGEEFS" (BUT NOT IN VAIN) directed by Edmond Greville.

"A KINGDOM FOR A HOUSE" as indicated by the title, concerns the housing shortage — so acute in Holland but the scenario by Piet Bakker treats this social problem rather as the starting point of a series of comic complications which do not get to the root of the problem. Moreover, it seems that the intention of the producers was merely to make an unpretentious entertainment film.

The nature of the film is definitely indicated by the choice of the two leading players: Henriette Davids — who recently paid a visit to Hollywood — and Johan Kaart, two popular variety artistes who achieved success in this type of film before the war.

The film opens with the requisitioning of a flat by an aristocratic couple, played by Matthieu van Eysden and Tilly Perin-Bouwmeester on behalf of Henriette Davids and Johan Kaart who are upper middle-class. Henriette Davids has a daughter, beautiful and well-bred, Annie van Duyn, whilst the aristocratic family has an "eligible" son, played by Rob de Vries. Little imagination, therefore, is needed to guess the complications which arise, and the inevitable denouement.

Comparing this Dutch production with those of the 1930's, whilst admitting that there has been a slight improvement the fact remains that the comedy scenes are vastly inferior to current international productions.

The photography is not without merit, but the acting and dialogue leaves something to be desired, and the script is quite inadequate — the blame for this can be chiefly imputed to the faulty direction of Jasp. Speiger.

Dutch critics have unanimously condemned the film, but it may have a better reception from cinema-goers more indulgent than the critics.

However, "A KINGDOM FOR A HOUSE" will remain at least for some time, the most recent Dutch film, for production in the *Cinetone Studios* at Duivendrecht (which were opened with some ceremony on August 25th, 1948) has practically come to a standstill, although the specialist technicians have been retained, provisionally. In fact no Dutch company dares to invest capital in Dutch films.

In most of the Dutch provinces by a Government regulation, a tax of 35% is levied on cinema shows. Contrary to the usual custom in other countries, where film-producing enjoys Government protection, due to price controls, reduction of taxes and even subsidies (as, for instance, in England) in Holland the maximum tax of 35% must be paid even on Dutch films, which makes the repayment of invested capital impossible even if a film is a success and plays to capacity.

In order to improve this untenable situation, discussions have been begun between representatives of the Dutch Film Industry and the Government — but so far no satisfactory results have been achieved.

One ray of light piercing the gloom in which Dutch film production is plunged, was the visit to Holland of Mr. George H. Elvin, General Secretary of the British Association of Cinema Technicians. This visit gave the opportunity for preliminary discussions with Government representatives on the subject possibility of co-operation between the English and Dutch film industries. Moreover, Mr. Elvin had talks with delegates from the "Nederlandse Bioscoop Bond" the Publicity Organisations and the Unions of Dutch cinema workers.

The principle aim of the Anglo-Dutch co-operation would be the joint production of films and the transfer of Dutch technicians to Great Britain.

The film "UNE SI JOLIE PETITE PLAGE" (SUCH A PRETTY LITTLE BEACH) combined production of the C. I. C. C. of Paris and the *"Dutch European"* of Amsterdam had a particularly cordial reception from Dutch critics. It had been originally arranged to make the film in the Dutch Studios at Duivendrecht. As these studios, however, were not ready for the date fixed and as existing contracts with the French actors did not permit of any delay in production, it was finally made in the French studios.

This extremely sad film in which the director Yves Allegret, contrived in a masterly fashion to reproduce the depressing atmosphere of an out-of-the-way little seaside resort, in Autumn, was named the "Film of the Month" a title which is awarded only to films of exceptional artistic or cultural value.

This title was likewise awarded to the American film "GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT" by Elia Kazan which is being shown at present in Dutch cinemas. Although the plot of the film is somewhat thin one cannot fail to admire the courage with which anti-Semitism is reprehended in the United States.

"SCOTT OF THE ANTARCTIC"

John MILLS brings to life the person of Scott in the beautiful production by Michael BALCON, directed by Charles FREND

Paul Reichhar[illegible] and Preben Le[illegible]orff Rye in: "STÖT STA[illegible] DEN DANSK[illegible] SÖAMAND" (*„The Danish [illegible]ailor Makes Good"*) the Danish Fi[illegible]n by Bodil Ipsen an[illegible] Lav Lauritzen which was voted the best in 1948

THE DANISH CINEMA

An agent of the Hipo-cop *(Hilfspolizei)* beats a Danish patriot. An authentic scene filmed by an 18 year old amateur from a window in Valby (suburb of Copenhagen) and incorporated in the film by Theodore Christiensen "YOUR FREEDOM IS AT STAKE"

Holland has likewise appreciated, for their realism and excellent construction "THE KISS OF DEATH" and "CALL NORTHSIDE 777" directed by the American Henry Hathaway.

After the series of noteworthy Italian films, such as "SCIUSCIA, VIVERE IN PACE" and particularly "PAISA", it is at present "CACCIA TRAGICA" (Guiseppe de Santis) which is attracting attention. The realistic manner in which de Santis has succeeded in portraying the ruins, the misery, the spiritual confusion and the moral decadence in Italy, bruised and crushed by the war, has aroused deep admiration. This film, also, has won the distinction of "Film of the Month".

The number of English films appreciated by Dutch filmgoers was smaller than last year. Among English films shown in Holland during the last three months, the one which attracted most attention was Anthony Asquith's "THE WINSLOW BOY" whilst the childish scenario of "RED SHOES", written, produced and directed by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, was severely criticised, despite the admirable ballet scenes.

J. Fortuin.

ITALY

"IN NOME DELLA LEGE"
A Film To Remember

Sicily continues to be a favourite theme of the Italian cinema. But, whereas Visconti's Sicily in "LA TERRA TREMA" was a barren waste of oleographic composition, and whereas Zampa, in "ANNI DIFFICILI", showed a country which bears very little resemblance to the real Sicily, Germi's "IN NOME DELLA LEGE" at last conveys the harsh reality of the Sicilian scene in a burning stillness of arid landscape, a dazzling whiteness of stony fields, lime washed walls and sombre, almost Mexican churches; the scene which has been depicted in our finest literature and is thus revealed anew by the cinema of to-day.

The story — based on Loschiavo's novel *"Petite Préture"* — unfolds itself against that most typical but little known element of Sicilian life, the Mafia, the mysterious organisation that had battled for centuries against local tyrannies and has defended, by admittedly primitive methods, all those whom the legal authority is powerless to protect. These defenders of the oppressed, however, often go so far as to substitute themselves for the law and become a source of disorder rather than of order. And, this, in effect, is the situation which greets a young official on arrival in a small hamlet hidden amongst the rocks of the Palerman coast. The Mafia has given its support to a petty nobleman of the district, thus enabling him to indulge in the shadiest transactions, and even to obstruct the working of a mine, thereby depriving the majority of the population of their means of livelihood. Police and magistrate alike are powerless, confronted with Mafian primacy, to put a stop to the banditry that flourishes in the district, and which even the Mafia dislikes: crime follows upon crime and robberies are the order of the day. The official retains his equanimity: he makes his position quite clear and refuses the Mafia chief's proffered collaboration, telling him roundly that his so called "justice" is nothing less than plain murder. Naturally enough the whole population is against him in a very short time, foremost amongst them being the nobleman, who sees him as an obstacle to this profitable activities. Equally, he alienates his own superiors in Palermo who disapprove of a zeal that will certainly be incapable of changing an order that has been accepted for several centuries.

Weary and discouraged, the young official gives up, but at the very moment when he is about to resign in favour of a more complaisant successor the bandits murder the only being who had shown him the slightest friendship in these hostile surroundings, a young boy who had become involved in a private feud. Whereupon the Official changes his mind. He rings the tocsin to call the villagers together and speaks to them very plainly. He tells the mounted Mafia of the mistake they are making in supplanting the legal authority. The Mafia chief persuades his followers, and under his orders they surround the lad's assassin and give him up to the official, who arrests him with the solemn formula, unheard in the district for many years "In the Name of the Law . . ."

The interest of the film lies in the discovery of this mysterious world of honour, of good faith and sound law, and also in the naive simplicity of these people, in the fidelity with which these contrasting characters are depicted, characters whom a gesture or a glance often suffice to define.

It is to be regretted that box office considerations have caused the insertion of an utterly superficial romantic interest into the soberness of the story, and it is a pity that Germi's mise en scène on its least happy note (banal interiors of the nobleman's house, dustily oleographic). Fortunately, however, the realism against which most of the tale is set is not without poetry, neither is poetry absent pour the clear and vivid contrasts which give the film life. With this film Germi has arrived: in these lucid, frankly human pages, which are both harsh and modest, he takes his place amongst the most promising members of the young Italian school.

The standard of acting is high: Massimo Girotti, Jone Salinas and Charles Vanel are excellent: Turi Pandolfini gives an expressive and haunting performance.

Gian Luigi Rondi

UNITED STATES

The success enjoyed by «JOAN OF ARC» and the French «MONSIEUR VINCENT» on Broadway and elsewhere throughout the United States started us thinking about the occasions when film producers have turned to the lives of the Saints for dramatic inspiration. The instances have been few indeed over the years. Yet, there is a rich reservoir of challenging human drama and historical spectacle associated with the lives of the Saints which our movie creators have either ignored through ignorance or simply overlooked in their preoccupation with boy-meets-girl romantic escapades and sordid crime matters.

Previous to the release of «JOAN OF ARC», which brought its producer, Walter Wanger, a special «*Oscar*» from the *Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences,* the last major production by an American movie company concerned with a sainted «personality» was *Twentieth Century-Fox's* «THE SONG OF BERNADETTE», one of the big hits of the 1943—44 season. Hollywood, however, is not alone in by-passing the treasure chest of such biographical drama, for producers in other countries seldom turn to this front for refreshment. Before «MONSIEUR VINCENT» opened in New York in the closing days of 1948 and went on to cop the Academy award as the best foreign film of the year, the last foreign picture of such nature which this observer remembers having seen was the Mexican-made «ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI», released in 1947.

This writer doesn't profess to know the producers' reasons for shying away from the lives of the saints as a basis for inspiring drama. Certainly commercial considerations are not paramount. «SONG OF BERNADETTE» was way up front among the money makers of its time. «JOAN OF ARC» was in its fifth month on Broadway at the time of writing and still doing nicely. «MONSIEUR VINCENT» also was in its fifth month, a remarkably good showing for a foreign picture that has no sex angle to attract the sensation seekers. The only black mark against «JOAN OF ARC» is its excessive cost, more than $ 5 000 000, in this era of curtailed dollar markets. It is said that the film will have to gross better than $ 9 000 000 in order to return a profit, and it is important that «*Joan*» does show a profit. Otherwise, it is more than likely that next time such a subject is suggested producers will take up the chant that goes «religious pictures don't make money. Look what happened to «JOAN OF ARC».

Since our last report Hollywood has come up with several films which have made movie going a stimulating experience once again. Foremost is «THE SNAKE PIT», a brilliant and frankly revealing study of conditions in mental hospitals in the United States. *Twentieth Century-Fox* showed great courage in tackling this pressing problem in forthright fashion and the public, disproving the belief that it doesn't want to think or face up to the harsh realities of life, has already responded in a manner that clearly forecasts great financial success for this film. Olivia de Havilland, in the role of a young married woman who becomes deranged, gives an astonishingly realistic performance. Here is without question one of the finest pieces of acting ever seen on the screen. Circumstances which prevail in mental institutions, the good and the bad, are carefully and, believe it or not, absorbingly dramatized as she experiences electric shock treatments and other physical and psychiatric aid in her slow progression from the darkness of insanity back to normality.

Although it goes to pieces in a whirlwind, melodramatic finish «JOHNNY BELINDA», produced by *Warner Brothers,* is a rather poignant study of a mute girl and her yearning to experience the joys and comforts of human companionship. The story is told against a picturesque Nova Scotia farm, and the camera makes the most of the interesting locale where the fishing fleets are the prime instruments of commerce. Here again is a picture distinguished primarily by performances. Jane Wyman is pathetic and wonderfully expressive as the timid girl who can neither hear nor speak. Lew Ayres, who is developing into one of our better actors, is splendid as the country doctor who undertakes to teach the girl the sign language, and thus opens up for her a whole new world. «JOHNNY BELINDA» moves across the screen like a breath of fresh air until the girl is criminally assaulted (raped) by a drunken fisherman. The foulness of the act is ultimately erased by the girl's childish, innocent delight in bearing a child and feeling that she, despite her affliction, is no different than other women. But the sensitivity with which the story has been told up to this point is lost in the final act of retribution when the girl shoots the man who dishonored her and is subjected to a routine court room drama.

Hollywood is paying only fitful attention to some of the great dramatic incidents of the recent war, but «COMMAND DECISION» is worthy

to rank, as of the moment, at the top of the list of reflective war pictures. This *Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer* production, adapted from the hit play of the same title, is a thoughtful and exciting study of the American airmen who flew the big bombers out of English airfields in the early days of the war. *It tells about the behind the scenes drama between the operational commanders and their superiors and politicians in Washington over the wisdom of pushing home daylight precision bombing raids deep into enemy territory when losses were running high.* Without resorting to dogfights and the conventional manoeuvres up in the wild blue yonder the producers have made a vastly exciting drama about the heroic sacrifices American airmen made in the name of humanity. Walter Pidgeon is outstanding in a large cast that includes Clark Gable, John Hodiack, Brian Donlevy, Van Johnson and Edward Arnold.

For change of pace, *Metro* also put out a first class musical in «TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME», with Gene Kelly and Frank Sinatra. And *Paramount* currently is showing off Bing Crosby once again in a light fantasy, with music, based on Mark Twain's «A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT». But for the cream of the recent comedies, none can quite match the mirth generated by Clifton Webb in «MR. BELVEDERE GOES TO COLLEGE». This is a sequel by *Twentieth Century-Fox* to its earlier «SITTING PRETTY» in which Mr. Webb captivated the heart of the nation with his acid wit as the author, Lynn Belvedere, who hired out as a baby sitter (a new fangled American custom whereby parents hire a neighbor at so much per hour in order to get a night out once in a while) to get some first hand material for a new novel. In the new comedy Belvedere, whose only formal education consisted of a year in *kindergarten,* submits to a college course simply to qualify for a cash prize that is his if he can produce a college diploma. The writing of the film is not especially novel but with Mr. Webb on hand it sparkles with gemlike quality.

After more than two years of preparation, David O. Selznick has finally unveiled his «PORTRAIT OF JENNIE», starring Jennifer Jones, Joseph Cotten, Ethel Barrymore and a climatic hurricane sequence guaranteed to blow you out of the theatre unless you take tight hold of your seat. This is a romantic fantasy in which an impoverished artist falls in love with a girl, who lives in time, and it probably represents the first time outside of «BARKELEY SQUARE» of many years ago that a mortal and a ghost have fallen in love on the screen. «PORTRAIT OF JENNIE» is a curiously wearying and fascinating entertainment which is thrown completely out of kelter by that thundering, howling hurricane that is presented in a sickly, sea green color.

However, all things considered it is beginning to look as though Hollywood is perking up again, though the happy day when the worthwhile and stimulating pictures will push the others into the background, if not entirely out of memory, is not quite here yet.

The current propensity to send film making crews on farflung location jaunts, in the interests of economy as much as pictorial realism, is a new cause of agitation among the ranks of Hollywood's employees. In recent months producing companies, with millions of dollars lying idle overseas due to currency transfer restrictions, have been sending groups of stars, directors and other selected top rank personnel to England, France, Italy, Germany, North Africa, etc. to shoot all or large parts of pictures in those locales. In this way the producers are able to put dormant profits back to work, but every time cameras turn on such projects fewer persons find work in Hollywood. Now labor unions and even the *Screen Actors Guild* are protesting the spread of this development. Ronald Reagan, president of the SAG, pointed out that unemployment reduced the movie workers payroll by $ 30 000 000 in 1948 under the 1947 level and said that transfer of production to foreign areas accounted for about one-third of the reduction in jobs available in Hollywood studios.

Although Hollywood continues in the grip of an economy wave, story purchases appear to be on the upswing. The fancy prices of a few years back are no longer swelling the pockets of fortunate authors of screenable novels, but the exceptional story still can command a modest king's ransom. For instance, Samuel Goldwyn thought so highly of «*Edge of Doom*», a forthcoming first novel by Leo Brady, that he paid the author $ 150 000 for the screen rights. Mr. Brady is an assistant professor in the speech and drama department of Catholic University in Washington, D. C. The book, which won't be published until the fall, is said to deal with the murder of a priest by a troubled youth.

A heartening trend is the declining interest of major studio producers in «POTBOILER» type crime melodramas. Agents report that the market

for this type of story has taken a sharp drop in recent months. Two factors are responsible. For one thing, several such films already are in release while still others are waiting their turn into the theatres. But, more important, there has been growing criticism from both the public and theatre owners over the abundance of this variety of melodrama in the last several months.

The *Warner Brothers,* who rushed into print with plans to film the life of Cardinal Mindszenty, have to all intents and purposes stopped for the time being, at least, active preparations on the proposed picture. Unofficially, it was said that the studio ran into difficulties in shaping a dramatically satisfactory treatment about the life of the prelate's martyrdom in Moscow's bloody and relentless warfare against the forces of religion and political democracy.

Thomas M. Pryor

URUGUAY

Quarterly Review

Success of FIESTA

The most notable event of the beginning of the 1949 season was the success of the M.-G.-M. film, "FIESTA", with Esther Williams and Ricardo Montalban in the leading roles. Its run of fifteen weeks at one theatre established a record.

The film's great popularity was not, however, mainly due to its value — it is one more spectacular film — but rather to the fact that it showed the Mexican danse *"la raspa",* a dance which is all the rage in Uruguay during the summer and the prolonged carnival season.

This factor, which the producers certainly did not foresee, resulted in unexpected profits which the mediocrity of the film in no way justified.

„SITTING PRETTY", another Hollywood success, confirmed the high American reputation for film comedy. In the same vein, "Mr. BLANDINGS BUILDS HIS DREAM HOUSE" was well received. On the other hand, although two or three humorous scenes in "MONSIEUR VERDOUX" were reminiscent of the old Chaplin, the bitterness of his false philosophy and his moral cynism did not please our audiences. Those who were drawn to the film by the renown of a famous comedian came away disappointed.

The foreign atmosphere of "ANOTHER PART OF THE FOREST", so different to our own, deprived it of all interest. "THE SEARCH", on the other hand, moved both public and critics deeply with the terrible problems it evokes, and the critics gave special praise to the clearly constructed scenario.

"LE PREMIER BAL" and "LE CORBEAU" were the French offerings. The former is a clumsy mixture of comedy and drama, whilst the latter, in spite of two or three moments of good cinema, is a morbid and immoral work reflecting little credit on its makers.

Argentina sent an unpretentious work, which is worthy of the highest praise. "PELOTA DE TRAPA" gives excellent proof of the capabilities of the art in our sister country, when it chooses the best amongst its own native subjects, which are admirably suited for translation into film. The success which this film had in Montevideo will be continued in the provinces. It is considered one of the best films that has come from Buenos-Aires studios in recent years.

"TIERRA DE FUEGO", the story of the missionary work of the Salesian Fathers in Patagonia, was shown during the dead season and did not meet with the anticipated acclamation.

Already seen at the end of last year, "LA PERLA", a Mexican production of higher than average standard, returned to our screens to the general approval. The photography of Daniel Figueroa and the plastic artistry of form were especially admired. What met with criticism was not Mexican: it was John Steinbeck's sordid and depressing story. The film affords fresh proof that success, both artistic and financial is more easily assured, if every country will make use of its own particular material.

SWITZERLAND

Film Panorama

Although it is true that no Swiss film had its premiere this year, the Swiss cinema can nevertheless be assured that its tradition is being carried on, since "PRÄSENS-FILM" started work some months ago on a new film which tells in comic style of an American G. I.'s trip to Switzerland on leave. German films, too, are still rare on the Swiss screen. One to be noted is "BERLINER BALLADE" which sets off the fireworks of its wise-cracking "cabaret" style in post-war Berlin, and chronicles with an amused detachment the sufferings and joys of Otto "THE NORMAL CONSUMER", that is, the man who only lives at ration-card level. The "cabaret" film is a new German creation, the Germans having made a virtue of the necessity in which they find themselves of having to treat serious themes in a humorous fashion. This same "cabaret" style, which replaces action with witticisms and clever dialogue, is also to be found in Helmut Käutner's film "DER FILM OHNE TITEL", a work which, unfortunately, is sometimes smutty and has allusions which leave an unfortunate impression.

"FABIOLA" has certainly met with good response from the public, but was badly received by the critics, with, it would seem, good reason. They say that

it represents a return to the days when from time to time the Italians used to throw one of their monster spectacle films onto the world market. No doubt the archaeological detail is remarkable for its precision, in fact the reconstruction of the many scenes is if anything too accurate and so presented as to cause the disagreeable feeling that no room has been left to see for oneself with the eye of imagination. The arena scenes are a regular potpourri of every possible actual or imaginary martyr, but this has nothing to do with Christianity or with true religious feeling. Eyes and ears are so fully occupied that the inner meaning of the scenes is lost or turns into nonsense. In other words, any high spiritual experience, whether it is religious — that is to say, united with God and responsible before Him — or whether it has no metaphysical connection, is completely destroyed by the reduction to the commonplace which it undergoes when it is visually presented by a series of violently direct pictures at close range.

Sometimes one is tempted to believe that all the great men are dead. At any rate, Hollywood offers shocking proof of it annually. Frank Capra, who only recently produced such witty comedies, fails us in "STATE OF THE UNION" by reason of the very wordy dialogue. Alfred Hitchcock, creator of some successes which have since become classics, founders in a sea of excessive talk in "THE PARADINE CASE". "IVY", the facile and vulgar latest of Sam Wood, to whom we owe "KINGS BOW", is only made tolerable by the magnificent talent of Joan Fontaine. And from an artistic point of view, Henri-Georges Clouzot, too, has failed miserably with "MANON".

One American tendency towards unadorned realism has already borne good fruit: "JOHNNY BELINDA" and "THE SNAKE PIT". "JOHNNY BELINDA" (by Jean Negulesko) tells the story of a deaf-mute girl. The film does not slip into the cheap sentimentality to which similar American productions have accustomed us, thanks mainly to the actress Jane Wyman. Any suggestion of "film-star" has been most happily avoided. The actress faces the camera without make-up. The beauty of the subtle and hesitant smile which lights up her face is the more charming for it. "THE SNAKE PIT" (by Anatole Litvak) is chiefly remarkable for the artistic fidelity and courage with which the surroundings of a mental asylum have been portrayed. Here, too, the director had to deal with a great actress, Olivia de Havilland, whose face and expressive acting have nothing to fear from the merciless camera.

The problem of the post-war child has already been treated in different films. We recall here "SCIUSCIA", "PROIBITO RUBARE", and "DIE GEZEICHNETEN". The Hungarian film, "SOMEWHERE IN EUROPE" (director: Geza Radvanyi) takes up this theme with a great deal of artistic persuasion. It is true that the film cannot avoid the criticism of having, towards the end, sacrificed the picture to the dialogue in a large degree. This criticism is not only true of the aesthetic form, but is equally so for the narrative, which loses itself in a boy's adventure story and, towards the end, gives itself up to a thinly disguised tendenciousness and various side issues. "GIOVENTU PERDUTA" (by Pietro Germi) tries to give us a picture of those young men who learned during the war to kill and murder, and who now, impelled by economic need and lack of moral sense, continue to steal and to murder. Unfortunately, it is not possible to believe in the director's sincerity throughout the film. Watching the film, the classification "box-office success" suggests itself more and more strongly, and the final impression left by "GIOVENTU PERDUTA" is of a cleverly produced gangster film which leaves one completely cold. A second Italian production, "SOTTO IL SOLE DI ROMA", (by Renato Castellani) is full of humour and has won an award. It shows the joys and sorrows of a youth spent under the shadow of the basilica of St. John. The film, which does not always avoid the common-place, is chiefly remarkable for its wealth of arabesque and unexpected little gracious touches.

To end this review we should mention two films which will appeal to a narrower public of connoisseurs. These, by reason of their treatment are studio films, inner mysteries of the seventh art. We mean firstly, the film "MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA", based on the great stage play Eugene O'Neill, and secondly, Carol Reed's work "THE FALLEN IDOL", based on Graham Greene's novel, "THE BASEMENT ROOM". In bringing to the screen Eugene O'Neill's powerful dramatic trilogy, which gives a new form to the Greek myth of the doom of the Atrides, a form which has for its background the Puritan America of 1860, the studio has, in fact, altered it and developed its psychological element to the extreme. But its chief value rests on its forceful portrayal by the actors. The work should be judged as an experiment, and from this point of view if one thinks of the artistic sterility of Hollywood as a general rule, it deserves attention and praise even if it is not a complete success. The charm and breadth of "THE FALLEN IDOL", whose scenario is by a master hand, make this film the most important of modern English production, even if — or rather, especially because — the director, who maintains a perfect balance as between the box-office film and the gangster film, has not made it easy for the spectator to grasp the central idea of the film, or to know whether the immature emotions of the young Phillips are in danger of being crushed for ever by the brutal impact of life and its comparative values.

Georg Gerster

POLAND

The cinema in a country behind the Iron Curtain.

To understand the specific role played by the film in the social and cultural life of present day Poland we must take into account the very special circumstances in which they are placed. During the five years of war the majority of the Polish nation obeyed the directions of the Resistance to boycott German films. Very many Poles of all ages kept away from the cinema altogether for five years and they became all the keener on the post war cinema by the fact that the country, ruined and disorganised, especially in Warsaw, the capital, could no longer offer its previous recreations. Although there were a few cinemas, the apparatus was often in a deplorable state and the supply of films small. Great crowds were to be found as soon as the war ended eager for cinema entertainment hat they had so long been denied. They queued up patiently for hours and came out delighted even from mediocre shows.

Thanks to its popularity in every quarter the film proved to be a first rate instrument of political and social propaganda. But the Communist regime digging itself in Poland had no films at its disposal, adequate to its own propaganda needs, or of sufficiently good technical quality to avoid the risk of more harm than good. With few exceptions Soviet films before the war were too specifically Russian to appeal to any other public and it was only towards the end of 1946 that the first Soviet films intended chiefly for foreign consumption appeared on Polish screens.

On the other hand, the national cinema of Poland was financially concerned to respect the non-Communist tastes of the majority of its customers.

That is why they got to the stage of a fairly liberal policy in cinema matters which allowed the showing of a good number of foreign films which did not minister to Communist propaganda in any way. The policy at first was to exclude any film directly adverse to Marxist idiology. However, a few films were allowed putting in a favourable light different ideas, especially Christian morality, as, for example, "THE LAST CHANCE" or even films in praise of democracy such as America's "MR. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON".

The best West films have not yet been shown in Poland, the official excuse being their high price and technical difficulties. As for others, the censorship admitted only films with a certain element of criticism of the Western social order or picturing the efforts of Western peoples against the German Invasion. Cinema criticism was given the task of showing the poor artistic and moral quality of American productions. Every occasion was taken to prove that this or that subject might have been treated with far more depth and care if Hollywood were not in the hands of financiers with no object but money-making, and pandering to primitive instincts and tastes depraved by Capitalism etc. Thus for lack of opportunity to do any direct propaganda through the film everything possible was done indirectly through criticism.

Poland has, nevertheless, seen some good quality Western films some of which have made a deep impression. These are chiefly the European films "THE LAST CHANCE", the Italian films "OPEN CITY" and "IL SOLE SORGE ANCORA", (THE SUN STILL SHINES), films which featured heroic martyr-priests witnessing to the nobility of their vocation; also English films dealing with the last war such as "SILVER FLEET", "MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH", "SECRET AGENT","IN WHICH WE SERVE" etc; the most successful French films have been "LA SYMPHONIE PASTORALE" *(PASTORAL SYMPHONY)*, "LA FIN DU JOUR", *(THE END OF THE DAY)*, and "LA BATAILLE DU RAIL", *(THE BATTLE OF THE RAIL)*.

As for the American films they have not been shown since the war in such a way as to win over the bulk of the public whose taste has certainly changed much these last years. For that public it is the subject matter that matters much more than a luxurious setting. People need a certain amount of ideology and solid moral quality whilst the American film passes lightly over such problems and stresses artistic expression — inadequate in quality for many Europeans. The Anglo-Saxon films which have proved most popular in Poland are those dealing with historical subjects or borrowed from well-known authors such as Cronin's "THE GREEN YEARS", "HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY" or Dicken's "OLIVER TWIST", "DAVID COPPERFIELD", "GREAT EXPECTATIONS", and also a few more serious films such as "Mr. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON", "CITIZEN KANE", "FROM MICE AND MEN" and "GRAPES OF WRATH".

None of the big films specifically Christian or religious has so far appeared on the Polish screen.

The Soviet film which as becoming more and more in evidence in Poland has to reckon with the popular distress and dislike and is not making much headway. Nonetheless it must be appreciated that it reaches a fairly acceptable technical and artistic level. There is evidence of a certain naivety of cinematographic art, realism which is at times to brutal but there is also a decided moral tendency, sometimes even puritanical, in praise of patriotism, altruism, sacrifice of the individual to a common cause. Rarely do they show in Poland films wholly given up to Communist ideology, its methods and achievements, except for one "LE CHANT DE LA TAYGA", *(THE SONG OF TAYGA)*. These films of pure propaganda are quite without artistic worth. It is rather the historic film recalling the exploits of the Red Army such as "LA GRANDE ATTAQUE", *(THE MAIN ATTACK)*, "STALINGRAD", "LE KIRHAN DE MALACHOWSKI", and the series of films about the history of the Bolshevik Revolution which, holding the spectator by their dramatic force, have a certain influence ideologically. The most popular of the Soviet films are undoubtedly those concerned with Russian romantic history: "ALEXANDRE NEWSKI", "IVAN LE TERRIBLE", "PETER THE GREAT", "KUTUZOW", "ADMIRAL NACHIMOW", "THE CRUISER WAREG", epic films of battles, historical tableaux, instinct with life sometimes with primitive brutality but always grandiose and leaving you with an impression of physical and psychical strength, a primitive people with a national awakening more powerful even than under the Czars.

The Polish film, on the other hand is still in its infancy with no more than mediocre technique available with nothing much in the way of artistic tradition (the Polish pre-war film hardly counted for anything internationally). The nationalised organisation *Film POLSKI* has put out a fairly serious effort in a few feature length films. Like the Soviet films shown in Poland, the Polish films do not openly feature Communist propaganda they just insinuate certain ideas to prepare the ground for more direct action. The principal themes are the struggle against German occupation,

international solidarity, the dignity of manual labour. The first films brought out had little success. "ZAKANE PIOSENKI", *(FORBIDDEN SONGS)*, which mingles Farce and tragedy with a story of resistence in the style of "BATAILLE DU RAIL", "JASNE LANY", *(THE LIGHTED FIELDS)*, "STALOWE SERCA", *(HEARTS OF STEEL)*, sentimental films on social things have incurred severe criticism both from the public and even from the critics. The first big success was "OSTATNI ETAP", *(THE LAST STAGE)*, which also had a good reception in several foreign countries. Public opinion, however, critized it on the score of showing Poles in a negative or humiliating role apart from Polish Jewry. The second important film "ULICA GRANICZNA" *(TRUTH HAS NO FRONTIERS)*, is wholly given up to Polish resistance in the Warsaw ghetto. As such, the film has been welcomed as something rather special and interesting. The last film to appear "ZA WAMI POJDA INNI", *(OTHERS WILL FOLLOW)*, is probably the best, based on a good script (the weak part in Polish films well directed and technically unimpeachable.). Here again the theme is the Resistance but in more depth and realism than in "LES CHANSONS INTERDITES". Public opinion is very favourable towards it. The Catholic weekly "TYGODNIK POWSZECHNY" while stressing the fact that the social aspect of the Polish resistance is shown too naively, note none the less that it is the first truly realistic Polish film.

At the same time the Polish cinema has to its credit a few good shorts little known up to now, public shows being too short in Poland, they are usually confined to special educational shows for schools.

Jean Geodinne.

Mary FIELD
Director Children's Entertainment Films, and G.-B. Instructional Ltd.

THE PROGRESS OF CHILDREN'S FILMS IN ENGLAND

It is now five years since the group called *Children's Entertainment Films* first started to make special films for children in Great Britain. These five years have been an interesting period, first of experiment and then of research. Although much yet remains to be done, enough has been achieved to provide material for some conclusions on and deductions from a great number of pictures that have been made and shown to children, not only in Great Britain, but in many other parts of the world.

The first fact — which is, perhaps, the most important fact, when one is considering the entertainment of the young — is that children do enjoy films specially made for them. There is some feeling in the United States of America that it is a mistake to make special story films for children, and it is argued there that part of the pleasure of "going to the pictures" lies in the fact that it is an adult form of amusement. But the showing of the children's cartoon, "SQUIRREL WAR", over television in the United States resulted in a great number of letters from American children asking for more of the English children's cartoons, while the exhibition of "CIRCUS BOY" and "THE BOY WHO STOPPED NIAGARA" in a special children's programme at Philadelphia this year was a marked success, observers remarking that the children were perfectly quiet and even ceased to eat popcorn during the showing of these special films — apparently a most striking testimony to the interest that the picture had for the young audience.

It is not every child audience that can immediately adapt itself to seeing a children's film if it has become accustomed to seeing adult pictures. Sitting at the cinema and looking at films intended for grown-up people, a child soon gets into the habit of not trying to follow the plot or story, the motivation of which is completely outside its experience. It sits and allows its eyes to be amused by the moving pictures on the screen while its intellect remains entirely passive. While it can be easily over-stimulated by scenes of violent action, its reasoning powers never come into play. So that even at a very young age it becomes a bad film-goer, prepared for passive entertainment. An audience composed of such children may at first not be ready to take part in the showing of special children's films, which, being suited to the experience and development of the audience, demand an effort on the part of its members. But almost immediately the children recognise that, in a children's film, there is real material on which their imagination can work and which provides them with experience, adventure and achievement. A course of children's films soon produces an audience that will not accept the ordinary adult programme, but demands films that it can understand and enjoy intelligently. In other words, films for children produce an intelligent child audience that is capable of developing into a first-class adult audience.

There is, of course, a changing taste with the changing ages of a children's audience. In England a child under the age of seven is not allowed into a cinema unaccompanied by an adult even for a children's programme. The simple fairy stories which are suited to this age of fantasy are, therefore, very seldom made into films in Great Britain. Most of the children who go to the special children's cinema exhibitions are between the ages of 7 and 11-plus, the realistic age, which enjoys films of adventure and achievement. The next age group seeks to re-find its fantasies, and so requires a different kind of film.

Different nations tend to make films for different age groups. Most European countries produce for the under-sevens cartoons and puppet films. The Russians used to make films for the second age group, but seem now to be concentrating upon the younger children. The Scandinavians have made films to suit all three age groups. Production outside Great Britain is, however, spasmodic, and the great flow of films coming from Britain are stories of achievement, although some fantasies have been attempted.

The product of *Children's Entertainment Films* is shown all over Britain, in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and is beginning to find a market in South Africa. Most of the films go to Holland, many to Sweden and Denmark and some to the Far East. It is particularly interesting to notice that the films have an international appeal, and are almost equally popular in every country. The truth is, of course, that children are similar all over the world in their likes and dislikes. While they are young they are not limited by national feeling, and they are ready to identify themselves with the adventures of a young child in any part of the world. This is a particularly hopeful sign, since it does suggest that children's entertainment films can eventually be made a basis of common understanding all over the world. It is, perhaps, not possible for us to love every other nation,

but it is possible to appreciate that other nationalities are human beings similar to ourselves, with similar problems and difficulties, with whom it is possible to feel sympathy and understanding.

After five years, however, it is quite clear that the time has come for some kind of international collaboration on the production and distribution of children's films. Many countries would like to use the product of Great Britain, but cannot do so for reasons of currency. Great Britain would like to import some films made in Europe, but again currency makes such importation difficult.

Besides this some common approach needs to be made to children's films. They could be internationally recognised as a category of their own, not coming within the feature film group, nor yet in the educational film section. If children's films were an entity of their own it would be possible to exempt them from the rules restricting the importation of films and many of the restrictions that still hedge about educational pictures.

The possibility of the exchange of films between different nations also needs to be explored. Above all a common approach to what is desirable in children's films needs to be discovered.

I may say that during the last five years Great Britain has not merely discovered for itself that children's films are desirable and practicable at home, but has blazed the way for the development of a children's film movement all over the world.

Mary Field

John A.V. BURKE
Hon. Secretary of Catholic Film Institute
Vice-president of the O.C.I.C.

CATHOLICS AND FILMS IN ENGLAND

The account of the part played by Catholics from the earliest days of the cinema in France makes us in this country reflect rather sadly on the historical accidents which have made it a sufficiently rare thing to find well-known Catholic names among the front-ranking makers of films. Indeed, it is a matter for regret that, on the whole, Catholics in England have tended to neglect where they have not despised the art of the film.

One reads with gratification of the pioneer work of men like Brother Basile Joseph, the De La Salle Brother whose efforts in the fields of art and education were rounded off by his early recognition of the potentialities of the new medium of film and who did much to spread the good news of the power of the film for good. One reads that as long ago as 1897 Brother Basile was writing scenarios for films on the Passion and other religious subjects. One looks around this country for signs of a similar alertness but in vain. We have to wait until the early thirties before we discover a member of the religious clergy deliberately making use of film for teaching doctrine.

I mentioned the accidents of history. These have always to be taken into account when assessing the artistic and cultural output of the United Kingdom. For many centuries Catholics were an outlawed, persecuted minority. After Catholic Emancipation in 1829 it took nearly three-quarters of a century more before Catholics began to feel "at home" in public affairs. The remainder of the old Catholic nobility were not much interested in the Arts and, if indeed, viewed them with some suspicion as tending to a dangerous degree of ostentation. The new poor, mainly of Irish stock, were too busy keeping body and soul together to have much time to devote to the finer arts.

Furthermore, there was the tradition which kept Catholics away from the universities. These were regarded as likely to undermine the Faith of Catholic youth and so the artistic stimulation which University life can provide was not forthcoming. In this connection it is worth noting that the more prominent and poetical of the modern British screen-writers and directors have come from the University-educated classes. Names like John Grierson, Anthony Asquith, Mary Field, each with academic backgrounds, are indicative of the quality which higher education can bring to the various departments of film production.

It is with great satisfaction, therefore, that the Catholic Film Institute reports the increasing interest now being shown in film by the Catholic University organisations in this country.

The story of the part played by Catholics in the world of film in the United Kingdom is, therefore, easily told.

It was in 1934 that the Dominican priest, Father Ferdinand Valentine, began his work of producing 16mm films for the purpose of teaching Christian doctrine. Father Wilfrid Upson, O. S. B., now Abbot of Prinknash, and Father Francis E. Young, a priest of the diocese of Southwark, were associated with him and there were also a number of devoted layfolk who assisted the two main sections of activity, production and projection.

An impressive series of films were forthcoming including "ETERNAL CITY" — a description of Rome, the Colosseum, the Forum etc.; "THE DOMINICAN MASS" — made at the Dominican Friary at Woodchester and of great liturgical interest; "HOW THEY SERVE HIM» — a film showing a day in the life of Nursing Sisters in a Maternity Home; "FIRE ON EARTH" — a social film dealing with the women's section of the Young Christian Workers in a typical English parish; "THE MOTOR MISSION" — describing the work of the Catholic Missionary Society and its motor chapel; "THE GIFT OF FAITH"

— depicting the progress of a convert to the Church and the ceremony of Reception; "THE MISSION FIELD" — a pictorial account of the work on the African Mission Field; "RETREATS FOR BOYS" — showing the work of the Catholic Junior Retreat movement. There was also an outstanding film dealing with Walsingham entitled "THE LEGEND OF NORFOLK" made by Arthur and Joseph Leslie, two Catholic professional cinema technicians who played a great part in the early days of the Catholic Film Society. These films are still to be seen and although by modern standards they leave something to be desired, they are, nevertheless a tribute both to the skill and enthusiasm of the original active workers of the Catholic Film Society.

There is no doubt that, laced with the technical ability and experience of men like Arthur Leslie and others, the production unit of the Catholic Film Society would have made great progress and produced films of great artistic and technical merit. The war, alas, intervened and the unit was broken up.

In the meantime other activities of the Catholic Film Society sprang up and included lectures on production and film projection, the organisation of a film library, regular film shows of special Catholic and artistic interest.

Perhaps the most important activity was the publication of Catholic Film News which began in 1938. This periodical was an outcome of the desire of the Catholic Film Society to put into effect the wishes of Pope Pius XI in his Film Encyclical. Its object was, from the beginning, to provide a vehicle of Catholic film criticism. "Catholic Film News is the vehicle of Catholic film criticism and not a censorship. Censorship seeks to apply to films the canons of condemnation, to indicate what is wrong and hurtful, rather than to approve what is right. Criticism, on the other hand, seeks to assess the film for what it is worth; and the standards of this judgment may vary widely from those of the critic who views films as an art and creative, to the man who is primarily interested in the Box Office." His Eminence, Cardinal Hinsley, who from the first manifested his great interest in the Catholic Film Society gave to the Catholic Film News his strong support and blessing. He wrote: "We want a guide to the *good* films. The undesirable films get plenty of publicity and we should not add an incentive to curiosity by advertising them, still more by denouncing them. Our efforts to promote a clean cinema must be positive. We should, therefore, depend mostly on the enlightened conscience of our practicing people."

Catholic Film News, besides carrying articles and items of general interest concerning the activities of the Catholic Film Society, aimed also at giving a critical review of the major films shown in public cinemas. These reviews were, from the first, entrusted to a group of Priests who by reason of their theological training and critical awareness were well equipped to act as reviewers of films even though not all of them had any first hand experience of film technique. As a matter of fact most of the Priest reviewers, who have varied from year to year, have had more than a passing knowledge of film technique. Many of them were keen amateur cinematographers, they visited the professional studios and their interest in and enthusiasm for this new art medium gave them an incentive for perfecting their critical skill.

Following the directive given by Cardinal Hinsley, Catholic Film News refrained from publishing a list of condemned films. It provided a list of films from which Catholic cinema-goers could choose when they wished to seek recreation at the cinemas.

Unfortunately, the war which had already put a stop to production, also brought an end to Catholic Film News, at least for a time. It ceased publication in October 1939, but after the first months of anxiety had passed publication was renewed in March 1940. Paper restrictions made it impossible to publish on the same scale as before the war and until paper restrictions were loosened in 1947 Catholic Film News continued to appear as a two page quarto monthly. Bearing these facts in mind it is surprising how skillfully and completely the film reviews continued to appear. Under the devoted editorship of Miss D. M. Retchford Catholic Film News made its appearance regularly in spite of air raids, evacuation, flying bombs, the blackout and other inconveniences in war-time London.

With the end of the war the Priest reviewers and a few of the remaining members of the old Film Society met together under the chairmanship of Father Ferdinand Valentine to discuss the future. The Right Reverend Wilfrid Upson, O. S. B., now Abbot of Prinknash was elected Chairman, the present writer was chosen as secretary and an interim committee elected to map out the aims and objects of the new Catholic Film Society in the light of post war needs and developments. A memorandum on those lines was submitted to His Eminence Cardinal Griffin who called a meeting of the Committee at Archbishop's House, Westminster in the early part of 1947 and gave us a mandate to continue and increase our activities, building on our experience of the past and enlightened by the teachings of Pope Pius XI in "Vigilanti Cura."

From the first the Catholic Film Society had had amicable relations with Office Catholique International du Cinéma. Although the time had not yet come for a full nominating delegation to the International Catholic Cinema Office, the Secrétariat in Brussels at once accorded us the privilege of being "corresponding members" (pays correspondant). O. C. I. C. itself had had exciting times during the war and its archives had been seized by the invader and its staff dispersed. By 1946 it felt itself in a position to organise a General Council which took place in Rome in October of that year. At this Meeting the Reverend H. A. C. Connell and Rev. J. J. Walsh, both members of the Catholic Film Society Commitee were present. As a result of the report which they brought back the Catholic Film Society was seized with the determination to do all in its power to seek full membership with O. C. I. C. A memorandum to this effect was drawn up and sent to the Hierarchy and in April 1947 the Reverend J. A. V. Burke was commissioned by His Eminence Cardinal Griffin to attend the Executive Committee of O. C. I. C., then meeting in Paris to draw up the final details of the 4th International Catholic Film Congress which was to take place in Brussels in June, 1947.

At this Congress Father Declan Flynn, O. F. M., and the Secretary of the Catholic Film Society attended, the latter as the nominated delegate of Cardinal Griffin for England. The further interest aroused by the reports brought back from Brussels stirred the Catholic Film Society anew and they set themselves the task first of all of increasing the size of Catholic Film News and renewing their efforts to increase membership of the Society and so gain support to enable it to carry on its various aims and objects.

These objects were set forth in the following heads and approved by His Eminence Cardinal Griffin who also

graciously consented to become the President of the Catholic Film Society:

1. To further the cause of Christian culture by means of the cinema.
2. To encourage the development of Catholic criticism of films with the object of influencing, as far as possible, the type of films publicly exhibited.
3. To promote the organisation of discussion groups for the study of films.
4. To establish a library of films of Catholic interest.
5. To encourage the production of films calculated to demonstrate the Christian cultural heritage of Europe in its arts, crafts, religious life, agriculture, architecture, etc.
6. To establish when and where possible Repertory Cinemas where films of permanent interest and value may be seen.

In view of the importance given to the subject in "Vigilanti Cura" the second of these aims and objects was considered to be the primary. Therefore, Catholic Film News was increased in size, changed in format and appeared under the name of FOCUS: A Film Review. It had the most gratifying welcome and has continued to increase in popularity and importance. It has by no means reached its apogee; we envisage an interesting development for it in which it may well become the organ not only of constructive criticism but of film appreciation in general from the Catholic point of view. It has received a welcome not only among Catholics but also from other Christian groups and many of the film studios regard it as significant of an attitude of mind which they are only too glad to encourage.

The Catholic Press in England helped us considerably by the generous welcome which they gave to the reports of our activities. A Catholic Film Sunday was organised and held at the Franciscan Church, Forest Gate, in October 1947 and the impetus which this gave brought about a widely increased interest in and membership of the Catholic Film Society.

An interesting and successful Summer Film Conference was held in August 1948 at which the subject "Film Appreciation" was fully covered by a panel of expert lecturers including John Grierson, Andrew Buchanan, Mary Field, Freda Bruce-Lockhart, André Ruszkowski and others; a conference which was specially graced by the presence of Monsignor Devlin, the Legion of Decency Representative from Hollywood. Conferences, lectures, participation in Summer School activities have become a normal part of our programme. One of the most valuable aspects of this growth in interest was the number of Catholic University Groups which showed themselves willing to make use of our services. As reported in another place in this issue the Catholic Film Society has been invited to give talks on Catholic Film action to most of the Universities in England. This is only a beginning but it is a very important one and augurs well for the development of intelligent film appreciation and production in the future.

Inevitably the time came for the Catholic Film Society to be associated more closely with the production of films. In accordance with No. 5 of its Aims and Objects it is more concerned to encourage the production of films calculated to demonstrate the Christian way of life than it is to enter into competition in however small a degree with the commercial cinema.

It was, therefore, considered both an honour and a further fulfilment of its Aims to be asked by the Medical Missionaries of Mary to associate itself with the presentation of Andrew Buchanan's outstanding documentary "Visitation". This beautiful film has aroused the greatest interest among all branches of the film world. Its production, it goes without saying, is on the highest professional level; but its method of presentation opens up a new vista in distribution economics. Without the aid of the elaborate distributing machinery which sends the normal commercial product around the circuits "Visitation" has been seen by an enormous number of people who do not usually go to the cinema, and who have been impressed both by the sincerity of the film, its technical excellence and the fact that it demonstrates a powerful way of presenting Christian activities to the public at large.

"Crucifers to Walsingham" is the second professionally produced film which the Catholic Film Society has the honour to present. This time, however, the film is entirely its own undertaking and, though more modest in length than "Visitation", with it the Society definitely enters the field of 35mm professional production. As these words are being written the Premiere showing is about to be held. It remains to be seen, therefore, whether the success which followed "Visitation" is also to be accorded to "Crucifers to Walsingham". We have no doubt that it is the first of a long series of films which, whether produced by the Catholic Film Society, will illustrate the varied facets of the Christian way of life through the medium of film.

The Catholic Film Society has this year also presented "The Sacrifice We Offer", a 16mm Kodachrome film produced and directed by Alan Turner from a script by Fr. H. McEvoy, S. J., telling the story of the Sacrifice of the Mass as it impinges upon the life of the workers in factory, in field, in offices. This film, which has had a great success in this country is to be reckoned among the amateur production, and indeed it has various imperfections which arise from the lack of professional studio equipment. Nevertheless, it can safely be said to mark a very important stage in the development of this side of sub-standard film activity in this country.

Both Abbot Upson and Fr. Francis Young have continued to produce 16 mm films in monochrome or in colour dealing with pilgrimages, monastery, or outstanding parochial activities. This points a way to a development in our affairs which was natural and inevitable. In England, at least, the noun "Society" when coupled with the adjectival noun "film" indicates a group of people normally concerned to produce or to show sub-standard films. The name "Society" therefore, had begun to be rather restricted in its definition of our purposes. At a recent Committee Meeting, therefore, it was proposed and agreed that the time had now come for the Society to become the *Catholic Film Institute*. This title is more accurate in describing the manifold activities which now fall to the lot of the Catholic Film Centre in England. It is truly an Institute from which will emanate teaching and practice in all the departments of film activity. This marks the end of a stage in our development and the beginning of an important new era.

The relationship of the Catholic Film Institute with Office Catholique du Cinéma and the other affiliated members of the O. C. I. C. has always been most cordial and valuable. It has been a privilege this year to make the organisation of the General Council Meeting in London our pleasant duty. We regard it as an omen of good for the

future that this General Council Meeting should take place at a time when our native activities are clearly on the increase. If, as I said in the beginning, the Catholics in this country have been somewhat slow in recognising the significance of film and taking advantage of it, we hope and are sure that our activities in the future will more than make up for the tardiness of our beginning. May we end this article by quoting once again from the first number of CATHOLIC FILM NEWS: "It is an effort which may influence wider issues. It implies recognition by all that Catholics go to the cinema, like the cinema and want to be entertained. Let us hope that these and similar efforts may win the approbation and the approval of all right thinking men, Catholic and non-Catholic; they will help to assure that a great international force — the motion picture shall be directed towards the noble end of promoting the highest ideals and the truest standards of life."

John A. V. Burke.

CATHOLIC TEACHERS' VISUAL EDUCATION GUILD

A. *Concerning the teaching of the Catholic Religion in Catholic Schools.*

1. The past few years have seen great progress in the supply of Audio-Visual equipment to the schools, and there is every indication that the ultimate aim of the Local Education Authority (one sound-projector per school, and one film strip projector per classroom) will soon be within sight.

2. Similar progress has been made in the availability of material for use with the equipment supplied free to schools by the Local Education Authority. Sound films, silent films, film strips, and pictoral wall-charts related to the film material are available in vast quantities — mostly on free loan — for use in teaching every subject in the secular curriculum.

3. Catholic Voluntary schools form part of the national system of Education, and Catholic teachers are part of the national teaching body. The Local Education Authorities are bound by law to maintain the Catholic Voluntary schools *as they are* (i. e., complete with their Catholic religion) and the Authorities now realise that they are bound by law to provide even the material for teaching the Catholic religion. Such teaching material is, in fact, provided.

4. Catholic schools, like other schools maintained by the Local Authority, receive Audio-Visual equipment and material, and use such material in the teaching of the secular subjects of the curriculum. For Catholic schools there is practically no Audio-Visual material suitable for use in teaching the Catholic Religion, which is the primary purpose of the existence of the Catholic schools. Teachers in Catholic schools are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that the increase in the provision of Audio-Visual material for the secular subjects has not seen a similar increase in material for use in teaching the Catholic religion. Therefore, Catholic teachers see their secular subjects being brightened and enlivened by the use of Audio-Visual material, while they are forced to teach Religion by the old methods, which, by comparison with the methods used in the secular subjects, leave much to be desired.

5. Therefore, it is obvious that Audio-Visual material for teaching the Catholic Religion in Catholic schools must be made available (a) as *quickly* as possible, (b) in *quantity* sufficient to meet the needs and demands of the schools, and (c) in *quality* as good as possible.

6. Catholic teachers have training in, and experience of teaching the Catholic Religion according to the Syllabus ordained by the Hierarchy. Catholic teachers are best qualified, by their training and experience, to suggest Audio-Visual aids suitable to their needs, and to the requirements of the Religious Syllabus. There are many teachers, lecturers in Catholic Training Colleges, Religious Inspectors, and others, who are recognised experts in the teaching of Religion and whose combined knowledge and experience would ensure the accuracy of whatever suggestions they would make towards improving the teaching of Religion in Catholic Schools.

7. By exchanging views and experiences of the use of Catholic teaching material, by attending lectures and demonstrations of Religious teaching material, by obtaining guidance from the accumulated experience of Catholic teachers on the quality of particular Religious teaching aids, Catholic teachers can assure the quality, and make the best use of any teaching material made available for use in teaching the Catholic Religion. Such exchanges of views, lectures, demonstrations, etc., can be efficiently provided by a Society formed for that specific purpose, and such activities would be more acceptable to teachers if they were organised by a Society composed mainly of the teachers and others qualified to advise on Religious teaching methods, from whom they were accustomed to receive guidance.

8. In addition to organising activities such as those outlined in the previous paragraph, the proposed Catholic Teachers' Visual Education Guild would have as its aim the provision of Catholic Audio-Visual material in quantities sufficient to meet the needs of Catholic schools, and as quickly as possible, whether by importation from other countries or by manufacture.

9. The proposed Guild would have for its object not only the provision of Religious teaching films and filmstrips, but also the provision of related pictorial matter, and related children's work-books. Several well-known Catholic teachers who are the authors of many such aids to the teaching of Religion are very interested in the formation of the proposed Guild, and have promised it their very valuable support. Several Religious Inspectors of Schools are among the original group interested in the formation of the Guild.

B. *Other considerations.*

1. Arising from the interest and enthusiasm of a few pioneer teachers, a chain of teachers film-groups has grown up throughout the country. These groups are designed to arouse the interest of other teachers in Visual Education,

and to secure the fullest use of the available materials and equipment. These teachers' groups have worked very closely with the Authorities, have received much assistance from them, and enjoy much prestige as the body to be consulted on all matters concerning Audio-Visual Education. The teachers' groups haved formed the National Federation of Educational Film Groups, and this Federation works in close contact with the Local Authorities' Committee (The National Committee for Visual Aids in Education), and the Ministry of Education's Committee (The Committee for the Preparation and Production of Visual Aids).

2. There are *no* Catholic Visual Education Societies eligible for membership of the National Federation of Educational Film Groups. Therefore, from all the deliberations, at all levels, on the subject of Visual Aids in Education, the Catholic voice is absent. It is very desirable that the Catholic view on the teaching of many of the secular subjects (e. g. Science, Biology, Geology, History) should be available when consideration is being given to the production of Visual Aids on those subjects.

3. The proposed Catholic Visual Education Society would be eligible to affiliate to the National Federation of Educational Film Groups, and would be accepted as a Member. (Letter from the Secretary, 13th December, 1948.... "I can see no reason why you should not go ahead and form the Society you have in mind, and can assure you that we should be pleased to have you affiliate to the National Federation"). The Society would have the right to appoint representatives on the Council of the Federation at the rate of one representative per 100 members, with a maximum of three representatives.

4. The proposed Catholic Visual Education Society would be recognised by, and acceptable to the Local Education Authorities, and would receive much assistance from the Education Department of the Authority. The assistance which would be given by, for example, the London County Council, would consist of (a) the free use of meeting place, furniture and equipment. (b) Printing of announcements from the Society to the members, and the distribution of these notices. (c) The loan of projectors and other equipment necessary for lectures and demonstrations. (d) The training of members, (free of charge), in the use, care and maintenance of all sub-standard cine-equipment, and (e) the use of production equipment, and the advice of the production Committee. The placing of Catholic Audio-Visual teaching material on the Council's "Schools Requisition List" (materials may be ordered for use in schools only from the Requisition List, up to a maximum of X — per year per child on the school Register. "X" varies for Infant, Junior, Secondary or Technical schools), would be a goal towards which the proposed Society would strive.

C. *Relations with the Catholic Film Society.*

1. The proposed Society would be limited in membership to (a) Catholic teachers in Catholic Schools or Colleges, (b) Religious Inspectors of Schools, (c) Youth Leaders in Catholic Youth Clubs or similar organisations concerned with the study or teaching of the Catholic Religion.

2. The proposed Society would seek affiliation to the Catholic Film Society. It would be financially independent of the Catholic Film Society, and would seek no assistance in that respect from the Catholic Film Society.

3. The proposed Society would welcome whatever assistance and advice it could receive from the Catholic Film Society towards achieving its objects, which, because of their specialised nature, limited appeal, and the other considerations outlined in A and B above, can only be achieved by a society limited to those mentioned in C, paragraph 1.

J. J. Bateman.

CATHOLIC ENTERPRISES

AN INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF RELIGIOUS FILMS IN VIENNA.

24th April — 1st May 1949.

Under the leadership of Cardinal Innitzer, Archibishop of Vienna, of the Protestant bishop M. Gerhard May, and of the Minister of the Federation M. Felix Hurdes, the Catholic Film Commission for Austria organised from the 24th April to the 1st May, in the Concert Hall in Vienna, an International Religious Film Festival whose great success with the Viennese public fully rewarded the corrage of t9e organisers. The guest from abroad could rejoice at the optimism, the will to march forward once more, (even though difficult times were a temptation to let things slide), to take part in intercourse between nations even in a period of great hardships. If the spectator carried away, as it were, a promise, this impression of a people who has said "Yes" to life and to the times in which we live, it was not least because he could see, by the way in which this demonstration was carried out, that people in Austria are ready to unite all Christian forces in a defensive and offensive front against a de-Christianised world which seeks to overwhelm us.

On the opening day in the solemn halls of the Abbey of *Notre-Dame des Ecossais*, the Protestant bishop M. Gerhard May, spokesman of the Evangelical Christians in Austria, thanked the Catholic Film Commission for keeping the Festival inter-dominational in character and being broad-minded enough to give a place to the Protestant film and also to the mind and thought which are its inspiration. He saw in this a sign of the times. "Denominational problems are in the background; Christianity is threatened by the general attack of a secularised world and the two denominations come together for a common defence. But it seems to me to be even more important that they have a better and a deeper knowledge of each other than has been possible for the last four hundred years. The intellectual conceptions which inspire contemporary politics have placed the Church in a new situation: she is on the threshold of a new heroic age in which she will be required to bear witness. Conscious of their missionary responsibility the Christian Churches have begun their attack against the world in the sphere in which it is furthest from God, that is to say, the film. Here they fight with their weapons of the spoken word, the sacraments and prayer. How the Churches mean to bring back to God the world which has strayed from Him, the Festival will show".

During the opening session, the Abbot of *Notre-Dame des Ecossais*, Monsignor Peiche, representing the chief Pastor of Vienna, read a letter from the Vatican which said, "The Holy Father has learnt with great interest that a week of religious films is shortly to take place in Vienna. He salutes and blesses the praiseworthy efforts which have for their anima further development of the religious film as a response to the needs of our time".

In the framework of the International Religious Film Festival it was not only by the showing films but also by contact with well-known people that the subject of the film, especially of the religious film, was approached. The Minister of the Federation, M. Felix Hurdes, spoke on the opening day on "*The Cultural Mission of the Film*". He insisted once again on the conditions preliminary to all work concerning the film. This work only has results if we begin with the individual, if the individual has realized the film's place in the great cultural framework of our time. In the course of human history the Word, which was in the beginning the eternal Logos, Revelation, has been more and more devalued, profaned for propaganda purposes and finally reduced to the level of merely utilitarian language. The necessity of living in huge masses in a century of technics and mechanization has not only given to man a different vision of things; it has also exposed his soul to fresh influences. The film offers one of these possibilities.

To Dr. Charles Reinert of Zurich, Director of the Catholic Film Office of Switzerland and Vice-President of the International Catholic Cinema Organisation, was entrusted the central theme of the week. "*The Problems of the Religious Film*". The speaker separated carefully the different classes between which we must distinguish when discussing religious films: the catechistic film, the religious documentary, the action film with a religious inspiration, and its purest form, the Mystery Play. These distinctions must bring clarity to a field where the extremely confused and indiscrimant use of the term 'religious film' has created disorder and ambiguity. Taking his stand on the examples and declarations of eminent film makers, in particular of the Swedish theologian, director and producer, Rune Lindstroem, the speaker demanded for the religious film a man of religious temper, requiring for a maker of films a character and moral worth beyond reproach. It was not difficult to show by various proofs that it would be virtually impossible to make a completely religious film if the creator, caught up in the pitiless mesh of big business, is deprived of his liberty and his power of artistic expression.

In his lecture "*The Film in the Spiritual Crisis of Time*", M. Alphonse Plankensteiner of Innsbruck gave a finely analysed diagnosis of the modern era. He pointed out the reciprocal connections between the spiritual crisis of to-day and an absolutely essential cultural manifestation of our time: the film. He showed that the present-day film is the expression of our age and of its ills by its beliefs limited to this world, by its sensuality (in the widest sense of the word), by its superficial mentality and by its appeal to mass emotion. In the film of the future he sought for a remedy and already found in numerous films of recent years indications of a new spirit. Hence the numerous attempts of the film of to-day to show as transparent the realities of this world and make them the symbols of the psychological or metaphysical reality which they conceal. Hence the numerous films which try to convey the idea of the community and in this way hope to bring back the modern collectivist idea to a true spirit of community. In connection with this question the speaker recalled the moving and consoling words which one of the participients of the Festival wrote on his return in the "*Frankfurter Hefte*". "We who have killed men, know to-day that we all belong to the same human family".

The superintendant Georg Traar took as his theme "*Youth and the Film*", and from the beginning he declared without ambiguity "What matters to us is not the film but youth". In penetrating words he described the dangers of the film for young people. Youth is a time of ripening; that is to say a responsible spiritual personality is forming: a man, with all that this word implies. The young man who is still developing needs the presentation of reality, of that reality which consists in knowing oneself to be a child of God and disciple of Jesus. But the film, by stretching

the imaginagion too far, destroys, or at least hinders, the exercise of independent and responsible thought, destroys and undoes the work of education. By its confused mixture of real greatness and pitiful paltriness the film is capable of upsetting everything and of forgetting the reality in which the young man should grow up, of making it appear insignificant, or falsely transforming it into a mere facade.

Apart from some discussions dealing especially with Austria, the presentation of films which took place in the evenings formed the principal part of this demonstration. On each occasion it was prefaced and explained by an introduction. When we think back over the programme, we must admit that this week of religious films demonstrated several times what a religious film, (as M. Charles R e i n e r t defined it so precisely in his lecture) is not. "BOYS TOWN" is a praiseworthy and striking tribute which pays homage to the magnificent work of education preformed by a priest, Father F l a n a g a n, but it cannot claim the title of a "religious film", (which ought to be and to remain a title of honour), as long as we require of a religious film that it embody the values of the faith and of religious thought.

No more than the priest" cassock in "BOY'S TOWN" can the cloistered setting and the nun's habit make "LES ANGES DU PÉCHÉ" a religious film. However, in the French film, the character of Anne-Marie does show forth in some measure the great commandment of charity towards one's neighbour, the true vocation to the religious life and personal self-sacrifice for the object of saving a soul.

The same applies to the American film "THE FUGITIVE". At the first glance it appears to be just a film of the wild west and a penetrating, though somewhat intellectual, human study. John F o r d has effectively narrowed down the field of its literary inspiration, Graham G r e e n e's famous novel, by presenting it solely from the psychological angle. But some idea of what constitutes the vocation and work of the Catholic priest keeps creeping in.

The only premiere of the Festival, that of "GUERRA ALLA GUERRA" by *Orbis Films* is a demonstration against war which tries to make an impression. It shows the happiness of peace and the horror of war, the average man's yearning for peace and the Church's efforts to obtain it, her appeals which go out and die away without being heard. It shows the relief work of the Sovereign Pontiff during the war, (shelter for refugees and war victims, gifts of food, an information service of imposing proportions), and the constant, unfailing efforts of the Church in the cause of peace. However, we cannot keep silence about certain reservations. The film is biased and takes no account of the relief work of other countries and other organisations, (for example the International Red Gross). In this way it gives, especially to the ill-disposed mind, a painful impression of an apologetic. Furthermore it is so simplified that it becomes demagogic. One remembers the juxtaposition of a waterlily in flower and a battle-field covered with corpses which was meant to beauty of peace and the horrors of war. The question is whether the conditions which have given birth to recent modern wars bore any resemblance to waterlilies, and one would prefer not to answer it. The film was made, according to the publicity, with the collaboration of His Holiness Pius XII. But looking into it more closely it is only a matter of a sequence of newsreels in which, it is true, the Head of the Church is introduced along with other personalities.

If we have not been able to abstain from making certain reservations about this film, the joy of seeing Maurice C l o c h e's "MONSIEUR VINCENT" again was all the greater. We wondered once more whether this hagiographical film should be considered as religious since its effect on the spectator is derived essentially from the human element, but we soon had to recognize that in this French week, the religious element, in the most original sense of the word is brought out: the human being in his capacity as a child of God, in his relations with God.

The Protestant contribution to the Film Week, the Swedish film "HIMMELSFERDET" must be considered, from the point of view of art and thought, as the summit not only of the Austrian demonstration but of all the religious films shown up to the present time. The path of salvation is symbolised by the farm-hand Mafs' path to heaven. The most difficult truths concerning salvation are made concrete by the grandiose photographic technique, fresco style, of the director. The idea of redemption through grace is easier for the Catholic to grasp than in L i n d s t r o e m's second Swedish film "ORDET".

In conclusion we must say a word about the atmosphere in which this Film Week passed. A spirit of brotherly unity reigned there which promises well for the future. Instead of the wordly atmosphere which covers the emptiness and boredom of ordinary demonstrations of this kind, there was a joyful interest in the work. Austria above all can expect from this Week inspirations and suggestions for her national production. She can also rejoice in the certainty that the talks and discussions were not in vain. After the various lectures the chance of expressing an opinion was used with eagerness and more than one fruitful intervention was added to the reports of the meetings.

Speakers constantly demanded from makers of religious films personal, moral and artistic integrity. Although this requirement can easily overshoot the mark if it is applied to secondary roles, the voices expressed a profond mistrust of that "religion" offered by commercial films as a speculation on a contemporary need or as a change from adventure films; a painfully false religiosity. On the other hand the consoling thought was not forgotten that if there has already been some speculation on religious needs, it is because there is a religious spirit present along the masses which is beginning to make itself felt. It is simply a question of making the most of these assets, and going on from there, either to influence current production or, building on this foundation, to attempt an independent production.

Two religious services — at the Cathedral of St. Etienne and at the Lutheran parish church, — brought the demonstration to a close. It will be renewed every two years to strike the balance of what has been achieved and show what still remains to be accomplished.

Georg Gerster.

In due time we shall return to some of the themes and problems of this International Religious Film Festival.

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR MILITANT MEMBERS OF CATHOLIC FILM ACTION.

The active member of the Catholic Film Association can and must:

1) Recruit friends to join the Association. The more numerous we are the more powerful will be our say in the matter of the present-day films. Apply to Headquarters for propaganda leaflets.

2) Have forwarded to himself the criticisms of the Catholic Film Commission on new films, follow the advice given and see that others do so. Possible ways of achieving this: notices on Church noticeboards, Presbyteries, Youth Clubs — publicity in appropriate pamphlets or periodicals — circle discussions. The FILM MIRROR is indispensible.

3) Give in his name as a film-critic to the Parish Committee. Enrol with the Parish Priest or Lay President for the advancement of these parochial discussions on films, further directives will be sent, if they are not already indicated in the following paragraphs.

4) Establish a local film-association. Three members of the Association are sufficient to set up a local film association called, for instance, Film Committee of Gumpendorf, or Film Committee of Wiegelsdorf. Our index-system will give help in this matter.

5) Either acting independently or with the local Committee sum up the situation in his own parish. Is there a cinema? What is shown in it? Who owns it? If possible, contact the owner.

6) Make an effort to exert an influence on the programme, naturally always by legitimate means, but perhaps also by energetic protests. Our 'Programme Section" will possibly help here.

7) Organise or agitate for special showings, particularly of cultural or religious films, which are not included in the programme. Our Headquarters will help here with advice and practical assistance.

8) Organise or arouse interest in instructional lectures on the cinema, and films, study-circles for the public or in Catholic action groups, particularly among the young.

9) As an amateur film maker choses religious themes, feast day celebrations for instance, give in title to Headquarters, if possible send a copy for our records. We shall also help, if possible, by supplying apparatus.

10) Pay particular attention to the question of "Young People and the Cinema". For instance scrupulously observe ban on certain films for exhibition to children.

Catholic Film Association,
Vienna I
Stephanspl. 3.

A CEREMONY IN MEMORY OF CANON BROHÉE

On May 2nd 1949 an impressive ceremony commemorated the second anniversary of the death of canon A. Brohée who was one of the founders of the O.C.I.C. and for 14 years its unwearied president.

The selected frame corresponded very well to the personality both very active and profoundly supernatural of canon Brohée: an abbey of Trappistines in the centre of the mining district of Charleroi, Notre-Dame de Soleimont which was one of the favourite retreats of this fervent priest, who went there to strengthen in contemplation.

The war 1914—18 suddenly put an end to the professorship of the abbé Brohée at the university of Louvain; he became chaplain of Soleimont.

It was on his impulsion that this teaching community went back to the strict observance of Citeaux. Though the ceremony, presided by H. E. Mgr. Himmer, Bishop of Tournay aimed specially to commemorate this fact, the panegyric of Mgr. Picard, pointed out by turns the glorious sacerdotal career, evoked the cinematographic apostleship which took such a great part and was the crowning. There was a great number of former companions of work and struggle of the Chaplain general of the film works of Belgium and President of the Office Catholique International du Cinéma, who went to pay homage to him who always inspirited them to aim at a higher view.

THE HOLY YEAR AND THE CINEMA.

As we announced in our last issue, the Holy Year will afford us an occasion of manifesting in a particularly efficacious manner, the interest which Catholics have in the cinema.

An important place is to be reserved for the cinema in the Exhibition devoted to Catholic Activities. In collaboration with O. C. I. C. and the National Centres, steps have already been taken to organise the elements of this exhibition.

A series of films will be made so that Pilgrims and all those unable personally to assist in the various functions of the Holy Year will be able to see them again by means of the cinema. The Holy See has encouraged the producers of the whole world to honour this occasion with films of Christian inspiration.

These films will be shown in the Exhibition itself as well as in the vast hall of the Maison du Pèlerin.

We mention again that O. C. I. C. has undertaken to organise an international pilgrimage of cinema professionals which will go to Rome at the beginning of September 1950 to pay homage to the Sovereign Pontiff and to proclaim their attachment to the Christian Faith. All those who are interested in this manifestation are asked to get in touch with the Catholic Film Centres in their own country or, failing that, with the General Secretariate of O. C. I. C. at 12, rue de l'Orme, Brussels.

NEWS FROM LATIN AMERICA.

Brasil. Constitution of the "Sacra Filmes Ltda". His Eminence Cardinal J. de Barros Camara has given his full approbation to the organisers of a new society, "*Sacra Filmes Ltda*" founded in Rio de Janeiro by our friends Rafael Mancini, Father Ponciano dos Santos and Isaac Tapajos, with the collaboration of the director of the Union of Workers of Brasil, Father Leopoldo Brentano. Here are the titles of the first films which the founders of this Society propose to make: "PECADORA IMACULADA", "PRINCESS PINDARASSA", "ANCHIETA O ANJO DO BRASIL", "A MEDALHA MILAGROSA", "ASAS DA MINHA PATRIA" and "RETIRADA DA LANUNA."

Columbia. Success of "Monsieur Vincent". Father Francis Dardenne sends us from Bogata news of the career of "MONSIEUR VINCENT" in that city. "It was given an exclusive run for 10 consecutive days (this constitutes the length of an exclusive run in our city). The cinema was crowded at each performance and the managment had to organise extra screenings. After this premiere run,

ILLUSIONS ON THE SCREEN: **NEW YORK AT DENHAM** Two scenes from GIVE US THIS DAY, directed by Edward Dmytryk in the British studios at Denham. In the first, scenes taken in New York form the back-cloth for the studio set. In the second, an entire New York down-town street has been reconstructed.

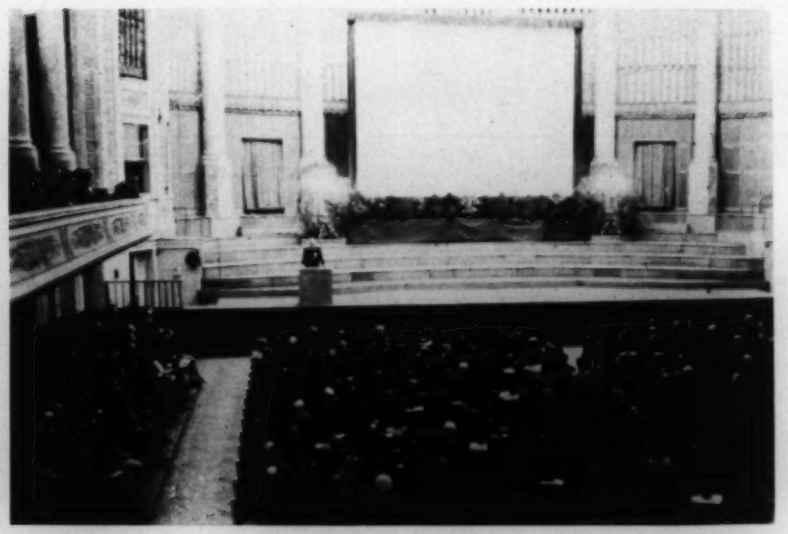
OCIC- *News Items*

1. LONDON — The Administrative Officers of the *Catholic Film Society* at work. The Editorial Board of «*FOCUS*»: *A Film Review* finds it easier after a cup of tea.

2. LONDON — The Administrative Officers of the *Catholic Film Society* at work. Edward Dmytryk discusses the moral aspect of one of the scenes of his film with the Chairman and Secretary of the C. F. S.

3. NEW YORK — Encouragements to producers. Arthur Debra (*Motion Picture Association*) and Nate Springold (Vice-president of *Columbia*) at the annual dinner of the *Catholic Alumnae*.

4. NEW YORK — Encouragements to producers. The Rev. James Keller, founder of the «Christophers» presents the first diploma awarded by this movement to the producers of «*JOAN OF ARC*» in the presence of the Rev. P. J. Masterson, of the Legion of Decency and Vice-president of O. C. I. C.



5. VIENNA — The Philharmonic Hall in Vienna during the *International Festival of Religious Films*.

6. PARIS — Before the premiere of the «SORCIER DU CIEL», the film about the Curé d'Ars, M. Fourré-Cormeray, Director General of the French Cinema, greets the Apostolic Nuncio, Mgr. Roncalli.

the film continues its career brilliantly in the other cinemas in the city."

The Review "*Cine y Libros*", organ of the Legion of Decency (Columbian) specially recommends this film to the public.

This success has been repeated in the other towns of the country notably at Medellin and Cali.

Venezulea. Brother Guadelupe, cinema star. We hear from Caracas that the former film star, Jose Mojica, who has entered an Order under the name of Brother Guadelupe, is likely to appear on the screen in religious films, "in order to serve the Church in this manner", he says. His first film will be made by the San Miguel Studios in Buenos-Aires.

Argentine. The Activities of Señor Carlos R. Copello. The energetic nephew of of the Cardinal Archbishop of Buenos-Aires, Señor Carlos R. Copello has been elected President of the C. I. N. E. Association whose affiliation with O. C. I. C. is to be decided at the forthcoming General Council of O. C. I. C. in London in July. Recently C. I. N. E. organised in Buenos-Aires a successful conference by Señor Diaz Romero, entitled "*How a film is made.*"

Señor Copello also is associated with the commercial group "SINCCA' Films whose first feature length film "RACE DE LIBERDAD" is to be presented in Buenos-Aires and about which we shall write later.

Brasil. A New Catholic Cinema. In San Salvador, State of Bahia, the active manager of the Catholic Cinema Circuit, Señor Francisco Pithon, has opened a new ultra modern hall seating 2000, with a "Simplex" projection room and air conditioning installation. It is called CINE ROMA. Our best wishes for its success.

"JOAN OF ARC" GETS THE "CHRISTOPHERS" PRIZE.

During a dinner held in New York, Father James Keller, founder and moving spirit in the Movement called "Christophers" about which we wrote in our last issue, officially presented to the producer, Walter Wanger, a diploma of honour, awarded to "JOAN OF ARC" for having "Illustrated magnificently the life of the Maid of Orleans", for "the general perfection of its production" and for having "positively demonstrated that a film which exalts the spiritual ideal, goodness and morality can constitute a popular success".

THE AMERICAN LEGION OF DECENCY AND THE CINEMA INDUSTRY.

On the occasion of the annual banquet of the *International Federation of Catholic Alumnae*, whose Cinema Section is presided over by Mrs James Looram and undertakes the moral classification of films in the United States, several representatives of the American film industry made contact with the directors of the Legion of Decency. During his discourse, Father Patrick J. Masterson, Executive Secretary of the Legion, defended the Production Code, which is voluntarily accepted by the producers. He mentioned also the spirit of "good cooperation" which the Legion met with from the producers.

"THE VATICAN OF PIUS XII" AVAILABLE IN 16 mm.

The excellent "MARCH OF TIME" film on the Vatican is now edited in 16 mm and copies are available for non-commercial showing. All informations should be addressed to "Library Films", Inc. 25 West 45th Street, New York 19. N. Y., and in Europe, to "BELGIAN AMPRO SALES", 18 Ave. de la Toison d'Or, Brussels.

CONTACTS BETWEEN DIRECTORS OF O. C. I. C. AND THE LATIN-AMERICAN BISHOPS.

While their Excellencies, the Archbishops of Montevideo (Uruguay) and Mexico (Mexico) were travelling in Europe, the directors of O. C. I. C. had the honour to be received in special audience by these eminent leaders of the Catholic Church in Latin America. The discussions dealt with the problems relating to the activities of Catholics in the world of cinema as well as the concrete points concerning the cooperation between the national and international plans of Catholic film action. We cannot but underline the broad views and practical interest which these Prelates evinced in the cinema during the course of their conversations. They have promised to set down for the benefit of the readers of the *International Film Review* their essential ideas on the connections between the cinema and the spiritual forces in the world. The benevolence of the Archbishops is all the more important in view of the act that Mexico and Montevideo are the centres, former and actual, of the Vice-presidency of O. C. I. C. for Latin America.

INCREASED ACTIVITIES OF FRENCH CATHOLICS.

Since we intend to analyse in greater detail the reasons for the great activity with regard to the problems of cinema which is seen among French Catholics, we will be satisfied for the moment in pointing out briefly some recent manifestations.

Intellectuals. For the first time in Paris, a Study Week for the French Catholic Intellectuals (MAY 8—15th, 1949) included in its programme an intervention on the subject of film. Entrusted to our General Secretary, M. A. Ruszkowski, this lecture was given within the section devoted to "*Faith and the Freedom of the Artist*", which was under the chairmanship of Paul Claudel, and introduced by a report from Stanislaus Fumet.

General Meeting of Catholic Action. The Annual Congress of the National Federation of French Catholic Action (Chairman, M. La Cour Grandmaison), devoted a special debate to the subject of the cultural and moral aspect of the cinema. J. P. Chartier, J. Desourmont, P. Gerin and E. Heron gave talks to the delegates with regard to the practical aspects of action to be taken within this region.

Children and the Cinema. Meeting under the presidency of Mons. Courbe, the General Secretary of French Catholic Action, the Catholic Committee for Children (in which are represented all movements and associations interested in education and teaching) decided to devote a great part of its work in the coming year to enquiries and activities within the domaine of the cinema. We shall certainly publish some of the more interests aspects of this programme.

Catholic Cine-Club. More and more local initiative indicates the coming formation of Cine-Clubs based on Christian inspiration. The problems were studied by the Parisian region at least, during a Study Course held on May 1 st, 1949 at the City-Club, at the invitation of a group from Versailles. In the same way, the fede-

ration "*Loisirs et Culture*", founded by Members of the Catholic Association of French Youth, intends to facilitate the work of this of kind Cine-Club. Recently, a new group, called "*Catholic Cinema Movement*" was formed in the same spirit. Some of these Cine-Clubs have already had great success.

The Family and the Film. In the North, the activities of the group known as "*Family and the Film*", already six years old, continue to develop methodically. It has 15.000 readers for its fortnightly review "*Film et Famille*", the number of persons who have been reached by its meetings for the analysis of films, conferences, study circles in schools or in various places totals 70.000, with 450,000 registered entries between December 1944 and December 1948. At present there exist 75 local sections of "Family and the Film." 100,000 pamphlets have been distributed, 3,000 letters published in the press and about 400 radio transmissions from Lille.

These few indications suffice to show what a powerful movement is in process of being born, which could exercise an influence on the public as well as on the profession, demanding only the coordination of all local and spontaneous efforts.

Some Christian Films. French cineastes are working actively in connection with several films of particular interest to Catholics. Not to mention the gigantic "DIVINE TRAGEDY" which Abel Gance is preparing so carefully at his home on the Côte d'Azur, we may note the release of "SORCIER DU CIEL" a film based on the life of the Curé d'Ars, so marvellously incarnated by Georges Rollin, which had its Premiere at the Salle Pleyel, on June 21st for the benefit of "Eau Vive". This was preceded by a short public debate on "*Sanctity on the Screen*", organised by our Review, in which Rollin himself took part, as well as Maurice Cloche and Father Pichard and Father Carré.

Two other films are being made: "LA CAGE AUX FILLES", by Maurice Cloche, dealing with child delinquency, and "DOCTOR LOUISE" a French-Canadian production of Abbé Vachet's for "*Renaissance-Films*", Montreal, and "*Fiat-Film*", Paris, directed by René Delacroix and Paul Vandenberghe. There is also the film being made by Gilbert Dupé on the life of DON BOSCO: "L'APOTRE DE GIBET". In addition we must mention the Christian tone of Pierre Fresnay's new film: "BARRY".

ECHOS

STUDY CONFERENCE ON CHILDHOOD AND THE CINEMA IN PARIS.

In the second issue of this review we hailed the setting up in France of an *Association Nationale du Cinéma pour l'Enfance et la Jeunesse* (A. N. C. E. J. — Ecran des Jeunes, 1, rue de Stockholm, Paris 8). This Association organised a meeting of certain enthusiasts who were anxious to include the cinema in their educational activities. A three day conference, from May 27th—29th, brought together people from all over the country.

The subject of children and the cinema had already been studied at conferences and congresses. Nevertheless the present gathering had a certain novelty. Much practical work had already been carried out by *l'Ecran des Jeunes*. Henceforward it was not merely a question of the theoretical study of the problem in its principal aspects (psychological, sociological, medical, juridical), but further and more important of promoting special shows for children, with suitably comprehensive programmes, on a large scale.

The solution of the problem of a children's cinema is bound up with the economic structure of the industry. The market for children's films naturally conditions the output of specialised production. In this respect, A. N. C. E. J. adopts a realistic attitude which is born of the very circumstances of its coming into existence: in effect, A. N. C. E. J. sprang from the meeting together of educationalists and cinema technicians who were already working on films for children.

The same preoccupation with realism can be seen in the broad lines of action which A. N. C. E. J. has laid down for itself. Children form an essential and impassioned section of the cinema's patrons. An extensive network of special sessions must be grafted on the spot, in their towns and even in their cinema halls. The fact of finding themselves together at such shows will create a real and dynamic community of children. The films chosen, of a quality, both technical and educational, which does not ignore their needs or their tastes, will give the consciousness of a cinema created for them, which can bear comparison with the usual conditions in which films for adults are shown.

It is clear that the essential is to work for the creation of a specialised production for children. The attempt to substitute such production for ordinary films for adults should be instrumental in awakening the public authorities on this point, and should lead to legislation concerning the admission of children to cinemas, which is at present practically non-existent.

The A. N. C. E. J. conference served to bring home to educationalists the need for co-ordinating their isolated activities. A national organisation can increase effectiveness whilst economising in effort, and it the same time create other enterprises. It can also envisage the future establishment of an international organisation working for a children's cinema.

Claude Macke.

UNITED NATIONS FILM PRODUCTION

The issue of the fifteenth of April of the "United Nations Bulletin" gives some interesting information on coming film productions either made directly by UNO or partly supported by that body.

Following the experiments of the first year's activity it was concluded that it is not possible to treat a subject in the same way for all the member countries of UNO. It was therefore decided to concentrate on a few wide themes, notably "*Progress in Latin America*", "*Understanding the Far East*", "*The Reconstruction of Europe*". Production Units will be invited to supply documentary material relating to these themes and capable of

being included in a film which might be made up of these elements. Thus a United Nations Film Library will be set up with documentary material from all over the world.

A "basic" documentary will be produced by the Cinema and Visual Information Division of United Nations, which documentary is provisionally entitled "LATIN AMERICA PRESENTS". This film will deal with the activity of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), It will also treat of the Havana Conference, of the efforts being made for the development of Latin American countries and of their role in the world to-day. We hope that the immense part played in these countries by Catholicism will be thrown into relief in this official film and we recommend our colleagues in Latin America to cooperate with those organizations in their own countries who will be asked to contribute towards the making of the film.

Another "basic" documentary "SPOTLIGHT ON THE FAR-EAST" will perform the same function in regard to the countries of Asia.

UNO will also produce four magazines on the following subjects : "*UNO and International Control*", "*Problems of European Reconstruction*", "*Living in the World*" and "*Political Activities of United Nations*".

FRANCIS BOLEN AT U. N. E. S. C. O.

Mr Ernest Bornemann, who will be known to our readers through the articles which he has contributed on the film programme of UNESCO, has just left the film section of that organization to devote himself to professional activity in the commercial cinema. This review expresses our gratitude to him for the sympathy which he so readily showed us and wishes him every success in his new field.

At the same time we welcome his successor Francis Bolen, the Belgian film critic, formerly head of the press service of the Belgian World Festival of the Film and the Fine Arts, with whom we hope to enjoy equally friendly relations.

C. I. D. A. L. C. CHANGES ITS NAME

At an Extraordinary General Meeting held in Paris on May 9 1949, the members of CIDALC while engaged in the re-election of some of their Committee approved at the same time a new phrase in their Constitution by which the name of the association will in future be "*Comité International du Cinéma d'Enseignement et de la Culture*". The initials CIDALC will, however, be retained to designate its character.

INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF DOCUMENTARY FILMS AT HAMBOURG

Among the ever increasing activities concerned with documentary films it is interesting to note the Congress held in Hambourg in May 1949, attended by delegates of sixteen nations, in the course of which more than ninety films were shown.

THE FESTIVAL SEASON HAS BEGUN

As we announced earlier, many international film festivals will be held in Europe this year. The first, that of Belgium, has just finished. In our next issue we shall give a resumé of the more characteristic events of its programme.

DEATH OF FRANCESCO PASINETTI

One of the most sympathetic figures of the Italian film world, Francesco Pasinetti, the young and dynamic theorist and historian who made such famous documentary films has died at the height of his career after a short illness. We offer our sincere condolences to his family, to his colleagues and to the whole Italian cinema which has lost a great artist.

FIRST CHRISTIAN STUDY OF THE FILM IN SWEDEN

According to the CND News Agency, the Swedish Association for Ecclesiastical Studies, in collaboration with the Film Bureau of the General Church Assembly has organized a course of studies designed to make Christians more fully conscious of their responsibility with regard to the influence of the cinema on the public. Mention was also made of the encouragement of the production of Christian films and of the standards which allow a good film distinguished from one of bad influence. The Agency adds that this is the first course of its kind in Sweden.

DANISH AUTHORITIES ENCOURAGE FILMS OF WORTH

Two recent measures illustrate to what point the Danish Government has realised the importance of the cultural value of the cinema. On the one hand the "*Danish Cinema Fund*" built up by means of a tax on exhibitors profits will be used for subsidies to producers who have made films of artistic or spiritual value, even though their ideology may not be that of the Government.

On the other hand, the official film centre (*Statens Film Central*) has concluded, at the instigation of its director Ebbe Neergaard, an arrangement with British and Dutch distributors of documentary films on the subject of the free exchange between these countries of short films, an arrangement which strengthens the position of the documentary film to a very great degree.

FUTURE PLANS OF CARL TH. DREYER

On this subject we note that the great Danish producer, Carl Th. Dreyer is working at the moment on a characteristic scenario on the life of Christ.

Two other subjects are also engaging his attention: the discovery of America (A Viking expedition about the year 1.000) and the tragic fate of Mary Stuart. It is not yet known which of these subjects will be first completed nor at what time.

SHOOTING AT MONTEVIDEO

There is being made at present in our country by dependable technicians a film called "EL LADRÓN DE SUEÑOS" which heralds the appearance of a new company "Emfoco". Its producer René Peluffo Vasquez entrusted the direction to Kurt Land who has a wide experience in Argentinian studios. The chief part is played by Santiago Gomez Cou, a well-known stage and screen actor, supported by Judith Sulian, the new actress Mirtha Torres, and actors from the National Theatre of Uruguay.

THE FILM IN AFRICA

According to the March 1949 issue of the review "Missi" the vicar apostolic of the Kilimandjaro mission (Tanganyika Territory, Africa) stated

to the *Fides* news agency "there are three cinemas in the tiny station of Moshi. All English and American films are shown there. Some negroes pay six shillings for every show, four for travelling expenses and two for their ticket. Now these are labourers who work on the coffee plantations and hardly earn more than a shilling a day".

DISNEY IN EUROPE

The leading exponent of the cartoon is at present staying in London where he is making a film based on Stevenson's "*Treasure Island*". He will later return to Hollywood where three full-length films are in preparation in his studios: "ALICE IN WONDERLAND" (which has nothing to do with a marionette film on the same subject made in France by Bounine), "CINDERELLA" and "TWO CHARACTERS OF FABLE". Disney was warmly feasted in Paris where he made a brief appearance to receive the "Victoire Spéciale" of the French cinema, awarded after a plebiscite taken among exhibitors and spectators by the reviews "*Film Français*" and "*Cinémonde*" The prizewinners at this competition included Michèle Morgan, Jennifer Jones (who also had come to Paris especially for this occasion), Louis Jouvet, Jean Delannoy, Jean Cocteau, Gregory Peck, Alfred Hitschcock and Sir Lawrence Olivier.

BOOKS

LE FILM SUR L'ART, special number of the review "*Les Arts Plastiques*", published by the Editions de la Connaissance, Brussels, January-February 1949.

Films on Art take on a great importance after the great technical skill which has dominated many recent productions. The cinema can become a method of instruction in art and can, even for artists, form an incomparable basis of culture, which up to the present has been ignored. "*Les Arts Plastiques*", appearing in Brussels in collaboration with the Belgian Film Library has produced a special number featuring studies on this problem by René Micha, Paul Davay, excerpts from the scenario of the film "RUBENS" articles on films about art in Italy, the United States and France, and also a most useful "*international list of films on art*".

HOLLYWOOD TO-DAY AND YESTERDAY by Robert Florey (Editions Prisma, 7 rue Scribe).

In the introduction to this book René Clair paints a picture of Robert Florey who "with the effrontery of a gold-digger launched himself into Hollywood, a city at once savage and undeveloped". That was in 1921. Two years later Robert Florey produced a curious work "*Film Land*" which is the most remarkable portrait that we are likely to have of Hollywood in the days of silent films. Since then Florey has continued his brilliant career, during the course of which he was an active and effective representative of France in the American cinema. Pierre Artis has to take notice of him in his "*Histoire du Cinéma Américain*". But in "*Hollywood To-day and Yesterday*" Robert Florey offers us the results of his observations. His book which has 380 admirably illustrated pages contains a detailed history of the American cinema with numerous names and titles of films, personal memories and his memories of producers, directors and stars. The chapters on the cinema other than in Hollywood and above all those which treat of Florey's work with Chaplin are most interesting. One is drawn into the intimate circle of Hollywood to find innumerable tales and personal idiosyncracies to remember. This is a most important book which is not far from being indispensable.

SENSE AND CENSORSHIP. Impact Books. No 2. London. 1/6d.

SEQUENCE SIX. Winter 1948/49. London, 2/-.

An interesting development of film appreciation is the growing number of glossily produced brochures emanating from University milieux which treat of films with the undergraduate's supercilious certainty of artistic and moral infallibility. Yet it would be a great injustice to dismiss them with a tolerant smile. They are, apart from the irritating mannerisms inseparable from their kind, most valuable evidence that there is now maturing an intelligent audience capable of influencing the cinema for good.

"*Sense and Censorship*" contains, among others, articles on British Censorship by A. T. L. Watkins, "Puritanism and the Cinema", by Roger Manvell, "L'Institut de Filmologie", by Paul Lambermont, and "Freedom and the Italian Cinema" by Frances Mullin Clark. "*Sequence Six*" includes essays on René Clair and the French Avant- Garde and a very interesting article on "Dance in The Cinema" which contains the characteristic remark, "The lukewarm reception given to "THE PIRATE" (M-G-M. with Gene Kelly) by the critics is the more surprising since it followed so closely upon "THE RED SHOES" to which it is far superior".

Edmund Barry.

BRITISH CINEMAS AND THEIR AUDIENCES. Sociological Studies, By J. P. Mayer, (Dobson, London 15/-).

Mr. J. P. Mayer, whose first book on films "*Sociology of Film*" created quite a fluttering among the psychological and film distributing dovecots, is here, it seems to me, on surer ground. He follows the same method as in the previous work but allows the documents from the cross sections of the British film-going public to speak for themselves. He divides the letters into two groups under the headings "Films and the Pattern of Life" and "A Study in Film Preferences". He contributes an Introduction in which he outlines the social and cultural implications of the cinema, and a "Retrospect" in which again he returns to the question of films and culture. "Films", he says, "must become a deliberate concern of cultural leadership".

For anyone who wishes to study the impact of the cinema on the lives and mental habits of the youth of today, this book provides a fascinating and frightening textbook. Nearly all the documents are from people who were taken to the cinema before they were of secondary school age.

Many confess that their first visual memories are of films. One girl of nineteen years writes, "Films have made me dissatisfied with my life. I know that all the stories are not true and the characters merely exist on celluloid but my brain refuses to accept it..... Films are like a drug, the more one has the more one wants, and yet, after seeing a film there is no satisfaction".

A controversial point is raised by the author when he writes: "There exists a considerable percentage among the cinema-going millions which is waiting to enjoy intelligent and relieving comedy and purifying tragedy, a tragedy which is not morbid.... Yet it is more than doubtful whether such a policy towards the deliberate raising of the cultural standard of films can be obtained as long as it is fundamentally a private business monopoly which by virtue of its financial weight dominates the international market."

A book that should prove of considerable value to film discussion groups.

Edmund Barry.

FILM SCRIPT: The Technique of Writing for the Screen. By Adrian Brunel (Burke, London 1948, 10/6).

For those who are misguided enough to want to become screenwriters — perhaps I should qualify this and say, writers for the commercial screen — Mr. Brunel has produced a lucid, highly instructive book that could be alternatively called "Screenwriting Without Tears".

Every aid to writing films is covered within its pages. Mr. Brunel has good advice on how to present material, whether in synopsis, treatment, or full script form, and there is a very necessary chapter on the value of a well-typed, clearly set out, attractive manuscript. This is more important than many beginners realise.

Another chapter gives a glossary of studio jargon that will enable the uninitiated to translate such alarming cries as: "Kill That Baby!" into plain and less murderous English. But most interesting of all to the newcomer to this form of writing will be the extracts from actual shooting scripts.

The author makes it all look so simple that I have a horrid feeling scenario editors will have already engaged additional readers to deal with the increased flow of material.

On the alteration, mutilation and general distortion that goes on after a script has been bought, the author is silent. But that is outside the scope of this book. Perhaps he will give us as a sequel: "The Technique of Dealing with Producers Who Think They Can Write."

Lya Lockwood.

ART AND DESIGN IN THE BRITISH FILM. By Edward Carrick. London. Dennis Dobson Ltd. 133 p. 18/. 1949.

This book is described as "A Pictorial Directory of British Art Directors and their work", and is the first work of its kind to have been produced. It has an Introduction by Roger Manvell, followed by a chapter on "The Designer in Films". Then come very brief biographical sketches of some thirty of the leading art designers who have worked on British films, with illustrations of their work. Many of the originals of these were shown at the exhibition of Film Art held at the Victoria and Albert Museum in the spring of 1948. These illustrations are of considerable interest; some are very pleasing in themselves and they compensate in part for a somewhat thin text.

It is of interest that the author founded, in 1937, the first British school of film design.

M. M.

THE USE OF FILM, by Basil Wright. A British Film Academy Recommendation (The Bodley Head, London, pp. 72. 3/6d).

This comparatively small book covers an amazing amount of ground in its pithy fashion. After a Foreword addressed dedicatorily to John Grierson, Part I skims over the history of film development, the elements of film composition, the commercial incentive in film-making, the Hollywood near-monopoly of world markets, the significance of the J. Arthur Rank organisation, and is largely concerned with the box-office feature film and the iniquities thereof. Part II expounds what is clearly the author's main thesis, the inevitability and importance of the development of the Documentary, especially of the non-theatrical type. Here he is obviously and wisely guided by the views and experience of that great pioneer of the documentary, John Grierson. He very rightly and forcefully emphasises the propagandist as well as the pedagogic power of this type of film, though he seems to dismiss all too briefly and lightly the splendid pioneer work of France in what may be called the "pedagogic documentary". Moreover, it must be remarked that the author's sympathy with "the powerful left-wing bodies such as the Unions and the Co-operatives" is not hidden and that there is an absence (perhaps consequent) of all reference to religious instructional films. The third section of the book looks ahead towards the desirability and possibility of "World Cinema" with "screen space for all" in the vast field of documentary which can have such an important part to play "in bringing the peoples of the world closer together in mutual understanding — the only real guarantee against war".

Hilary J. Carpenter, O. P.

FILMSPIEGEL. *Gutachten der Katholischen Filmkommission für Oesterreich*, printed by the Filmkommission, Vienna 1, Stephansplatz 3, 101 pp. Sch. 7.50, 1949. With a Preface by Canon Dr. Rudolf, edited by Dr. Erika Reiner-Haala.

The Austrian Catholic Film Centre has published a list containing the moral appreciation of 234 films shown in Austria between 1 October 1947 and 31 December 1948. This work is distinguished by the great care which has been brought to the appreciation, both objective and comprehensive, of current productions. It is certain that future editions will be of increasing importance as national production increases.

FILM SCENARIOS. There appears in "*Les Classiques du Cinéma Français*", published by Nouvelles Editions, 213 Boulevard St. Germain, Paris "LA GRANDE ILLUSION" a film by Jean Renoir with a scenario by Charles Spaak and Jean Renoir. This is an important work which invites discussion and it is extremely useful to have the text. Some stills from the film are used as illustrations and quotations from critiques are given at the end.

The scenario by René Jolivet has inspired M. Jean Charles Reynouard to write an article on Marcel Blistène's film "LE SORCIER DU CIEL" (Jean-Marie Vianney, Curé d'Ars) which appears in the collection "*The Book of the Film*" in the Flore edition. This book follows the action of the film closely and stills are used to recall the principal scenes.

Marcel Rivet publishes in the same Flore edition the story of the film "L'HOMME AUX MAINS d'ARGILE". This is a popular biography of Marcel Cerdan whose admirers will read the book to relive the film.

LE CINEMA PAR CEUX QUI LE FONT. Compiled by Denis Marion. A. Fayard, Paris, 1949, 405 pp., 600 French francs.

The general public takes a passionate interest in every aspect of the cinema industry. Denis Marion's anthology elucidates the mysteries of the credit list, that collection of names which occupies the screen at the beginning of every film. He repeats, with suitable adaptation for French methods of production, the formula of the book "Silence, On Tourne..", in which a series of artists and technicians describe their own part in the making of a film.

After an introductory outline by G. Sadoul, P. Sceze and G. Charensol, we are introduced to all the different branches of the industry, from production to film criticism. Each branch is represented by one of its best known members. And so we see the names of Charles Spaak, J. Delannoy, Edwige Feuillère, L. Barsacq, G. van Parys, etc.

At the end of the book the reader will have had as comprehensive a summary as possible of the immense collective work that constitutes a film. In a work of this kind a certain amount of repetition is inevitable. A very human tendency on the part of each participant to attribute to their own branch the lion's share in film making is also noticeable.

Certain statements made by G. Huysman, president of the "Commission de Contrôle des films" in France, have been noted with interest. What he says about the influence of Catholic Film Action is most flattering, but the conclusion that he draws is somewhat surprising: "The state has a duty to ensure freedom of production, and its vigilant control forms the very condition of such freedom."

Official censorship as a safeguard against the "control" of private organisations, amongst which Catholic Film Action is the most influential: it must be admitted that this is somewhat unexpected. L. L.

ARTICLES

UN APOSTOLADO INDISPENSABLE: EL CINE. From *PAX ROMANA*: May, 1949.

The organ of the international Catholic Students' and Intellectuals' Movement publishes an article in Spanish, highly condensed and very rich in content, on the necessity for Catholics, especially the intellectuals among them, to make a considerable effort in the realm of the film apostolate. It quotes what has been done by the O. C. I. C., and in particular, our Review and the volume "*Les Catholiques parlent du Cinéma*", which contains the text of the discussion at the Brussels international Congress.

TENDENCES GÉNÉRALES DU CINÉMA *by Jean Morienval in "La Croix": Paris,* 22/23 May, 1949.

One of the pioneers of Catholic criticism, Jean Morienval, warns against certain abuses of the cinema and against audiences' lack of critical sense. "When all is said", he says, "the world appears through the cinema not as it is but as one would like it to be, in a dream of ease and complacency." The author draws the conclusion that there is necessary a more advanced study of films, not only from the aesthetic, but especially from the moral point of view, as well as a special education, not only of young people, but also of the adult public.

EL CINE Y LOS CATÓLICOS from *"El Mensajero del Corazón de Jesús": Havana, March, 1949; page 13.*

The interest which Cuban Catholics bring to the question of the cinema is confirmed in this brief notice, which quotes the excellent "*Focus*" of London as affirming that it is not sufficient (although it is necessary) to warn practising Christians off from immoral or dangerous films: we must offer them films which are positively good, not only from the moral, but also from the technical point of view.

LE PROBLÈME DU CINÉMA *by André Roy, from "L'Action Catholique", of Montreal: 28th March, 1949: page 4.*

This Canadian author declares himself even more definitely : "The cinema, like the radio, electricity or the motor-car, has arrived; it has taken its place in our everyday life. It has become a habit. *In itself, the cinema is an excellent thing*". Naturally, the author does not ignore the dangers which can also arise; he states forcibly, speaking of the public, that "it is supremely important to correct our mistakes, to educate ourselves", and he asserts that "there must be an examination of conscience with regard to the cinema." He also speaks of the efforts undertaken in this direction by our Review.

LETTRE A H. G. CLOUZOT *by the Rev. Fr. Pichard,* O. *P., from „Témoignage Chrétien", Paris, 1st April, 1949, page 5.*

An example of this "examination of conscience" is offered to us by the fine letter which Fr. Pichard addressed to the maker of the film "MANON". We regret that we have not space here to quote more extensively from this excellent document of the film apostolate. With the possible exception of a phrase rather belittling the "leagues of decency", everything in his letter is admirable, the contents every bit as much as the style. We will quote, however, this outstanding phrase: "The immorality here comes less from the presence than from a frightening absence of grace." Or again, "You will say that Manon is not a mystic and indeed is

far from being so, poor creature. But I tell you that God knocks at the door of every heart and you have failed even to suggest that knocking. You have only shown us the wrong side of the tapestry, and you would like to prove to us that there is no reason in its design." And this conclusion: "It is the achievement of a great art to know how to show, hidden behind the facade of human lies, God speaking. Your own could make the attempt."

O FILMIE I KATOLIKACH *by Jan Drukarz, from "Tygodnik Powszechny": Cracow, 13th Feb. 1949, page 4.*

The weekly paper of the Archbishopric of Cracow has attempted to explain to Polish Catholics the evolution which the problem of religious films has undergone in the western countries. According to the author of the article, three stages can be distinguished in the activity of Catholic organisations in this field; the "negative" aspect of the condemnation of certain productions; next, the formation of the critical faculty of journalists and of the public in general; and finally, the production of truly Christian films, capable at the same time of being artistically completely satisfactory.

LES CATHOLIQUES ET LE CINÉMA. *Seven cyclostyled pages issued by the "Centre d'Informations Catholiques": Paris, 27th May, 1949.*

A special edition from the C. I. C. agency also gives a very complete review of the question, and especially of what is being done in France in this field. After recalling basic principles, it shows how the moral classification of films and the information of the public are carried out in France, how the "family" cinemas are organised, and under what conditions Catholic intervention should make itself felt in production. One chapter is devoted to the "artistic education of the public", and a few lines to the new prospects opened by television, the sub-standard film and the amateur cinema. The publication of this special edition by the C. I. C. fully proves what we say elsewhere in this issue — that French Catholics are determined to extend their action in this field.

LE CINÉMA EN AFRIQUE DU NORD *by J. Gabin: from "Missi", Lyons, March 1949, page 90.*

Some interesting details of the birth of the North African film industry are given in this article from the excellent missionary review "Missi". A few films are made in Morocco, as well as in Tunisia and in Algeria, generally in two versions, Arabic and French, the second often only by doubling.

LES FILMS ET L'ÉDUCATION DE BASE *from the "Bulletin Trimestriel d'Education de Base": a Unesco publication: January number, 1949, page 26.*

This is a brief but very instructive resume of the report of the commission set up by *Unesco* to consider the technical needs of the Press, the Cinema and the Radio, and deals with their work in 1948. Emphasis is laid on the prime importance which the cinema could have in the fight against illiteracy in certain Asiatic and Latin-American countries, since "educational films provide not only the means of instilling important ideas in the minds of the illiterate, but they constitute beside an excellent method of eliminating illiteracy itself."

LE FAIT RELIGIEUX A L'ÉCRAN DE "MONSIEUR VINCENT" ET DE QUELQUES CATHOLIQUES *by Jean Morienval, from „Lumen Vitae:" Brussels, Jan.—Mar. number, 1949.*

This article shows the importance of the cinema, thanks to which countless crowds who would never have read a life of St. Vincent de Paul rush to see pictures of him on the screen. In one month more human beings have heard of Monsieur Vincent than in the twenty years preceding the film. M. Morienval shows that the religious film is as old as the cinema, and studies some recent religious films: "THE SONG OF BERNADETTE"; "KEYS OF THE KINGDOM"; "GOING MY WAY" "THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S."

LES AU-DELA DU CINÉMA *by Jean Morienval, in the same review: Oct.-Dec. number, 1948.*

The cinema, which uses all kinds of intellectual material, has often embarked upon the marvellous, more or less stripped of the supernatural. There are films about magic, often notable for their incomprehension; films where the Devil appears; others devoted to ghosts; others undertake to represent the future life, but with a cold and intrancendental convention, which is found to be exactly the same in widely differing films. Now there is a Christian conception of the marvellous which is more rarely shown. M. Morienval concludes that from a great number of these films, where the future life is presented, empty of all religious sense, spiritual substance and Divine presence, there may be created in popular opinion an idea of what we may expect after death, very different from Christian reality. This would necessitate a system of instruction which would take as its theme this type of film.

FONDAMENTI TEORETICI DELLA CINEMATOGRAFIA D'ARTE *by Pietro Conte, from "Responsabilita del Sapere":* Rome, *No. 11/12, 1948.*

To those who are interested in the philosophy of cinematographic art we warmly recommend this excellent study, published in the very handsome review for Italian intellectuals, which is supported by Mgr. Mauricio Raffa, member of the Pontifical Commission for Religious and Didactic films.

REVIEWS

REVUE INTERNATIONALE DE FILMOLOGIE. 92, Champs Elysees, Paris 8e. Director: Gilbert Cohen-Seat. Annual Subscription (4 numbers): France and the colonies, 750 frs. Abroad, 900 frs. Special Number, October 1948.

Among the different film reviews, a special place is due to this publication of the Institute of Filmology at the University of Paris, which first appeared at the beginning of 1948. Encouraged by its moving spirit, M. Gilbert Cohen-Seat, and under the presidency of Prof. Mario Roques, the Institue has not limited itself to setting up within the Sorbonne a centre of research and instruction on the cinema, but it also makes every effort, by international meetings and the publication of the *Revue Internationale du Cinéma* to correlate the experiments which are taking place elsewhere in this field.

In the special October number which we have before us, M. Cohen-Séat deals with the subject "*Filmology and the Cinema*". He presents the great difficulties which still oppose an exact definition of the object of filmological research. To the definition established by the French centre, which ran: "The study of the cinema film and of the effects on indivuals and on groups of its presentation and communication to the public", the International Bureau added: "Scientific study of documents, observations and experiments, of all the technical, physiological, sociological, psychological and pathological conditions which establish the relationship between the film and the spectator". This conception of filmology implies objective research and a sustained effort of thought which refuses to categorise the film either as "language" or as "art", such a categorisation running the risk — as Prof. Wallon observes in his remarks on the subject of this article — of imposing on the cinema the limits implied by our present definitions of language and of art.

The table of contents of this same number contains articles by A. Michotte van den Berck ("The character of "reality" in cinematograph projection"), R. C. Oldfield ("The visual perception of the pictures of the cinema, television and radar"), Dr. F. Minkowska ("The Rorschach test, children's drawings and the cinema"), Y. Galifert and J. Segal ("The cinema and the physiology of sensation"), Mario Ponzo ("The cinema and psychology"), John Madison ("The cinema and the mental training of primitive peoples"), Dr. Siegfried Kracauer ("The cinema and the sociology of pre-Hitler Germany"), Alphonse de Waehlens ("Movement, mystery, horizon of the cinema") etc.

It is especially pleasant to find in this list the names of several Christian scholars. It would be a regrettable occurrence if "spiritual" thought took no interest in researches which may have very important effects on what we may call the "mental hygiene" of whole nations. It is impossible to over-encourage Catholic scholars in all countries, not only to follow the course of this workwith interest, but to take an active part in it through their own investigations. This work, "*La Revue Internationale de Filmologie*", in a more specialised way than our own, will be essential adjunct.

EDUCATIONAL SCREEN. Monthly: Director, June N. Stark, Chicago, Ill., 64, East Lake Street.

We lack space in this issue to speak at greater length of this important publication, which is intended for those who are most especially interested in the instructional cinema, and we recommend it strongly to our readers as well as the annual catalogue of "non-theatrical" films, published by the same editor under the title, "*One Thousand and One.*"

LIBERO ORIZZONTE. A monthly on Sub-standard film: Directors, Pietro di Mattia and Marcello Cavallaro. Rome, Viale G. Cesare, 27. Annual subscription, Italy, L700, abroad, L1, 400.

Italy displays an astonishing activity in the field of substandard film, and its publications on this subject are full of interest. Among other useful information we find in the 4/5th (April-May) number, this year, a short interview with Don Cordero of the Pia Società S. Paolo, who gives impressive figures on the progress which is being made by the cinematographic department of this company, which possesses at present in Italy 35 hiring agencies, with more than 40 sub-agencies. They are working at present exclusively in 16mm. Among the hundred people who run the service at present, no-one knew anything about the cinema in November, 1947, when it was decided to begin. It has needed a great deal of enthusiasm, of devotion and an earnest apprenticeship, to form the necessary teams. But experience has shown that it was quite possible.

MOTION PICTURE HERALD. An industrial weekly published by the Quigley Publishing Co., Inc., 1270 Sixth Avenue, Rockefeller Center, New York, 20. Director: Martin Quigley. Annual Subscription: U. S. A. $5.00. Abroad, $10.00.

To those of our friends who have asked us for the addresses of industrial publications of the cinema, we introduce the most important of the American weeklies, published under the direction of one of the pioneers of the Christian ideal on the screen, Martin Quigley. In addition to a very detailed documentation on the industry in the whole world and on the new films presented in the United States, the Herald gives every week the recent moral ratings published by the "National Legion of Decency", and it gladly opens its columns to news about Catholic activity with regard to the cinema. Once a month, the issue contains a supplement, entitled "Better Theatres", which gives useful details on the latest technical improvements in cinematographic exhibition and in the design of cinemas. Finally, considerable space is devoted to the "*Drive-in*", that is to say, a cinema in the open air where the audience sit in their own cars during the show.

S. I. P. E. (SERVICIO INFORMATIVO DE PUBLICACIONES Y ESPECTACULOS): published by Marian congregations of Spain. Madrid, Zorilla, 3.

Part of the bulletin of the Spanish Marian congregations is devoted to the cinema; it gives detailed criticisms of national and foreign films with appreciations of their value from the moral point of view.

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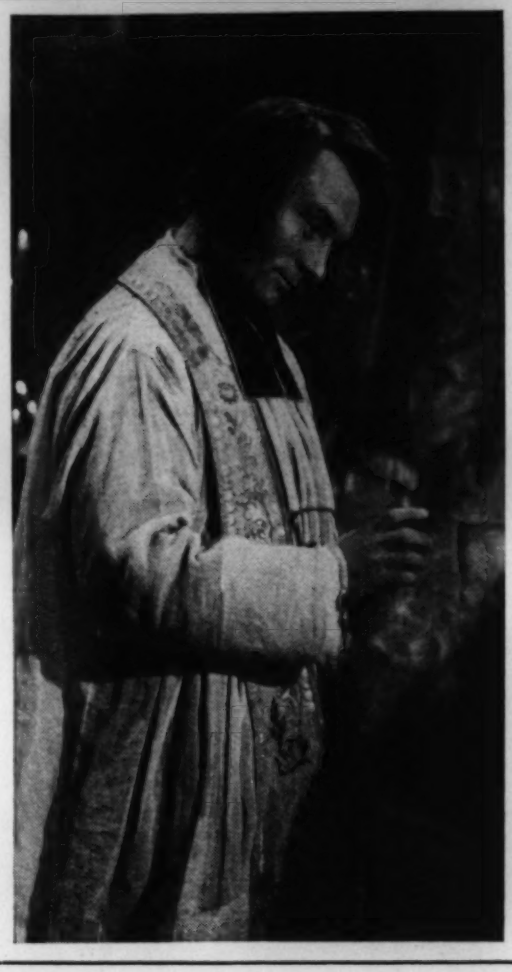

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In the same issue there will be reports of the Festivals of Knokke, Venice and Cannes and of the meeting of the O.C.I.C. in London, review of the latest American films, among them "Home of the Brave" by Thomas M. Pryor, pleading in favour of the young who wish to become specialists of the cinema by Marcel Huret, etc.

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